CASTE CULTURES AND FERTILITY IN SOUTH KARNATAKA

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the writing of this thesis is entirely my own work.

Monica Jackson, M.A., M.Phil.

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ABSTRACT

This population micro-study was undertaken in Chamarajanagar taluk, a rural region of the Indian State of Karnataka. The aim of the research was to ascertain the effect of community cultures on fertility. For this purpose six caste-groups were chosen to represent the two main cultural traditions coexisting in the area of fieldwork. Dual methods of investigation were employed: a formal questionnaire survey, complemented by participant observation with unstructured interviews. The results of data analysis revealed that, although the figures for current family size for the total sample were low by all-India standards and contraceptive practice correspondingly high, there were considerable differences between the communities studied. The traditional methods, lengthy lactation and post-birth abstinence, were shown to have a positive effect in reducing fertility, while higher education, especially of women, had the same effect. Ignorance and fear of contraception, the indifference of husbands, and the desire for sons manifestly increased fertility. Such elements of social and economic change as inflation, increasing urbanisation, the spread of Western ideals, and mass education are inducing couples to adopt birth control, since a large family is becoming a perceived liability. But the evidence of both quantitative and qualitative data indicates that the principal determinant of low fertility is the autonomy of women, especially in regard to the right of wives to control their own reproduction. The caste-group with the smallest families in the sample is poor and illiterate but accepts the relative independence of its women. The fact that the group has fairly low child mortality appears to encourage wives to terminate childbearing after one or two children. In the light of these findings, it is suggested that development planners should act vigourously, not only to educate women but also to promote their independence in the interests of reducing population growth.

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PREFACE

The choice of location for the fieldwork on which this study is based, as well as my primary qualification for undertaking the research, were largely the result of nurture. In short, I grew up in the area. My parents and grandparents had in living memory been closely involved in the affairs of a large number of the inhabitants of Chamarajanagar taluk, and are remembered with affection. As my parents' child I was made welcome when I returned there.

Since the family's connection with that part of south India did not end until the mid 1950s I was furnished with a valuable entrée into the local social structure when I went back more than twenty years later in the rôle of a social anthropologist. These antecedents also provided a serviceable foundation of background information, to say nothing of the opportunity to observe the effects of social change in the area over the past quarter century.

Between 1974 and 1981 I made a series of extended visits to Chamarajanagar, living first with an orthodox Hindu joint family in Chamarajanagar town and subsequently in a one-room farm dwelling, mud-walled and palm-thatched, on the fringe of Somavarapet, a mixed-caste village not far from the town. I was also able to spend time in the hill range where our family had once lived, renewing the acquaintance of old friends among the workers on the coffee estates there and among members of the local jungle tribe.

My paternal grandparents were the first foreigners to settle in the wild and remote massif which forms part of the south-east boundary of the taluk. In the penultimate decade of the 19th century they began to plant the coffee estates there which still give employment to the villagers of the taluk interior and which were the abode of three generations of the family for nearly seventy years. In all that period no other planters owned estates

there. Thus, in the thirty-five years for which the hills were my own home place, the rôle of my parents, Heather and Ralph Morris, was much closer to that of the Indian hereditary landowner than that of the British planters in the large planting communities which, with their nuclei of clubs, shops and other amenities, had been established in the more accessible of the hilly regions of the South. To this day there are only two roads, barely navigable, to the hills, both built by the Morris family, and the rest of the taluk remains now as it was then, an isolated rural backwater with little to attract the Indian visitor or foreign tourist.

The social environment of Chamarajanagar is therefore that of a traditional small-town and rural society, slowly changing under the pressure of modern communications and ideas, secularisation and - recently - inflation. The influences of modernisation have been altering both circumstances and attitudes very gradually over the years, while the powerful agency of economic determinacy has achieved its own effects rather more rapidly and directly. These agents of change are affecting traditional attitudes to some degree, though the changes are not all desirable ones.

The research project to be discussed in the following chapters was funded by the Overseas Development Administration and conducted under the auspices of the Department of Sociology, University of Edinburgh. Through the good offices of the Indian Council for Social Science Research, permission was obtained at the beginning of 1979, from the Indian Ministry of Education, to undertake research in south Karnataka. My Institutional base in India was the Centre for Theoretical Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, though the staff there did not see much of me owing to the distance of the State capital from the fieldwork area.

The goodwill earned by my parents which, twenty-five years later, led to an early acceptance of my presence and motivations, was summed up by one Chamarajanagar worthy in a welcoming address: "We will not call her a visitor. She belongs here and she is one of us." However, conscious as I was of the advantages of being afforded, so to speak, the freedom of Chamarajanagar taluk, I was often very much aware of the advantages of not in fact belonging there and indeed of the positive value for an anthropologist of this ambiguous position On the one hand people were able to 'place' me. On the other a well-disposed stranger and foreigner with no axe to grind was regarded not only as a sympathetic listener but also as a safe recipient of confidences, which I hope I have honourably kept, but which afforded me many insights.

The same conditions were applicable when it came to conducting the demographic survey, about the feasibility of which I had had the reservations to be expected of an anthropologist wedded to the methods of participant observation. There were plenty of people about to introduce me and my interviewers and allay the fears of those who may have suspected us of official designs on their reproductive capacity. Once their fears that we represented some alarming new prospect of duress were relieved many of those who agreed to be interviewed replied so freely and at such length that the interviewers found themselves the recipients of confidences which subsequently proved difficult to classify and code. This was particularly the case with the wives, who often used the interviews as an occasion for unburdening themselves of pent-up domestic grievances.

But participant observation was by no means neglected in the course of the fieldwork for this population study. Living alone and cooking for myself

on the cow-dunged floor of the verandah of my shack, as I did for a year in 1979-80,(carrying on the habit of previous years), I received a constant stream of callers of both sexes and of all classes, castes and ages, many of whom were prepared to gossip by the hour. The use of a place of my own where people were able to relax without self-consciousness outweighed the advantages, in terms of methodology, of living with a family, although both situations led to fruitful insights. Living alone meant, for instance, that I was not confined to the company of any particular caste or group of castes, and so was able to receive a fairly unweighted impression of the local social structure. It also meant, of course, that the investigator enjoyed a modicum of privacy from time to time.

It is much to the credit of the inhabitants of Somavarapet, many of whom were extremely poor, that although the door of the shack had no more than a primitive latch on the inside, it did not occur to me to fear burglary or assault. Other aspects of the simple life were less pleasing. I could have done without the vociferous rats which shared my bedroom, the ubiquitous cockroaches, mosquitoes, eye-flies, ants and hornets, the presence of centipedes and scorpions, the heat, the noise, which were all part of daily - and nightly - life in the village. Visits to the hills were a great joy, not least because they afforded a respite from these inconveniences. On the other hand my congenial and helpful neighbours, kindly landlord, the good-natured and generous people with whom I daily met and conversed, as well as the friendliness and hospitality of the people on the hills, whose interest in my family never seemed to flag, was heart-warming, and it was truly sad to have to say goodbye when I left.

In winding up this introductory note it remains for me to record my grateful acknowledgments to: The Population Bureau of the Overseas Development Administration, and in particular to Susan Long for her support and encouragement; to Roger Jeffery of the Sociology Department at Edinburgh University for his patience in nursing me through what must have seemed to him an endless series of crises; to Lynn Jamieson for her staunch support in my running battle with the Regional computer; to Tom McGlew and Trevor Jones, the former for his specialist advice on the demographic aspects of the research and the presentation of this thesis, and the latter for his help with the intricacies of data preparation; to Anthony Good of the Department of Social Anthropology for his invaluable criticism; and to Geoff Cohen of the Department of Statistics for his unfailing kindness and prompt assistance. Turning to India, I am also deeply indebted to my alter ego of many years, Laeeq Futehally, and to my honorary aunt 'Ivy' Muthanna, both of Bangalore; to that hospitable pair de Wet and Joubert Van Ingen of Mysore; to the staff of Honnametti and Kartikerri estates and to Sri K.S. Vaidyanathan and the staff of Attikan estate; to the Director of the Anthropological Survey of India, Mysore; to the Director of the Indian Institute of Science for accepting an unlikely cuckoo in his academic nest; to my friendly landlord and his family; to gentle Dr. Jaya of Chamarajanagar; to my four interviewers for their good natured endurance; and to all the friends in the town, villages and forest settlements of the area, whose tolerance I so often imposed upon. To these and to all those others not mentioned here whose kindness is remembered, my appreciative thanks are due. And lastly I should like to take the opportunity of thanking my husband not only for his co-operation

and aid but for putting up with my absence, and (worse) the traumas and dramas of my presence in the course of the project.

Two final points: firstly, I have chosen to add the English 's' to form the plural of Kannada nouns where I have had occasion to use them in the following pages, since in Kannada the plural suffix often depends on the context. And secondly, in the chapters on caste, kinship and the status of women, I have had perforce to draw on material discussed in my previous thesis in consideration of the fact that the hypotheses on which the present work is based arose out of my previous fieldwork in the same area of Mysore.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

(1) Background to the Research

When the suggestion was first mooted that I should carry out a population study in Chamarajanagar taluk using the techniques of demographic anthropology, I was acquainted with the works of only five anthropologists who had written on societies in the old State of Mysore. These were: Alan Beals (1962), Scarlett Epstein (1962,1967,1973), E.B. Harper (1959,1967,1968), W. McCormack (1958) and M.N. Srinivas (1952,1959,1962, 1968,1974). As far as I know there had been no studies at all, either demographic or anthropological, made of the Chamarajanagar taluk other than my own previous research in the area, with the exception of that of S.G. Morab of the Anthropological Survey of India, who wrote a memoir on the local hill tribe based on two months fieldwork (Morab 1977). Judging by his complaint (personal communication), that the men tended to reply to his questions with a surly or bland "gothilla" ("I don't know"), and the women often refused to speak to him at all, his was a creditable achievement. My interviewers sometimes encountered similar problems, and the fact that I was more fortunate in my interaction with members of the tribe was entirely due to my family's long connection with the area as a whole and the tribe in particular.

In view of the paucity of literature on population subjects in the region I had perforce to fall back on my own field notes, which embodied evidence that was largely qualitative. My hypotheses were therefore mainly inferences based on genealogies

(but not enough of them to be measurable statistically); household composition data; informal, unstructured interviews and participant observation. I had, however, already made an analysis of certain community norms (to be discussed below), with regard to kinship, marriage, and the status of women in six representative jati, local communities or castes, and was interested enough by the strong association of jati-specific kinship norms with the status of the female members of the groups to suspect that there would be a further association between family size and the wife's status in household and community. This in turn led me to believe that there could well be a relationship between the ideologies of castes, as local communities, and fertility. The only way to find out whether this was so was to return to the taluk and undertake a formal questionnaire survey, using the anthropological techniques of participant observation and case analysis to validate and amplify the demographic data. This I did in the course of the year between May 1979 and May 1980.

(2) Issues which the research was designed to investigate

From the beginning it was clear that a number of important variables must intervene to crosscut any direct relationship between community culture and fertility and that no single factor in isolation was likely to be decisively influential. It was predicted therefore that linked combinations of the variables discussed below would be likely to affect fertility in the area. These were as follows:

2.1 Caste. Although a subsequent chapter will be devoted to this subject it must be mentioned here as the chief independent and antecedent variable as well as one of the central issues of the research project. It is

virtually impossible to discuss rural or small-town society in India other than in terms of caste. However else one chooses to define the phenomenon, caste is undoubtedly an invaluable system of categorisation, and it is certainly employed as such by the people of Mysore, as well as by those who require an analytic tool for the study of local hierarchies from the 'outside'. In the villages of the Chamarajanagar taluk, as in the rest of village India, the caste of everybody except that of the passing stranger is known. It is a constant which makes it possible to 'place' every woman, man and child. The system still flourishes in the taluk in spite of the tide of secularisation and modernisation sweeping the country and the consequent weakening of its ritual connotations, including the concept of the purity/pollution polarity. My sojourns in the taluk also disclosed the existence of values and precepts which I believe to be the clue to an 'emic' view (briefly, the view of the actor as opposed to 'etic', the view of the observer of a different culture) of the institution: while jati are certainly groups sharing a common culture this alone is insufficient as an interpretation of local attitudes towards jati other than their own. Basically a jati, or local caste-community, is perceived there as a natural phenomenon, almost a distinct ethnic stock, rather than as merely a social or religious category. As such, the local communities tend to envisage each other in terms of stereotyped characteristics. This point will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on caste.

My survey sample was drawn from the six representative communities of my previous analyses (mentioned above), namely - in attributive hierarchical order - Lingayats, Jettis, Banajigas, Sholigas, Upuligas, and Harijans. With the addition of a few more high caste

groups they were chosen because they represented a cross-section of society in the taluk, numerically as well as institutionally.

In the process of collecting data on kinship during my previous visits to the area I had received the impression, without having any statistical evidence to warrant it, that the Sholiga hill tribe, and possibly the two low caste groups, had fewer children per couple than had non-Westernised members of the higher castes. It was also my impression that Westernised higher caste couples had fewer children too. I had been struck by the huge families I had come across in some of the higher caste groups among their more conservatively-orientated members while, conversely, not only were Sholiga, Upuliga and Harijan genealogies narrow in spread as well as brief in depth, but also informants from these jati appeared to have relatively few siblings and offspring. My comparison of the kinship and marriage conventions of the six castes led me to believe that if this impression turned out to be well grounded, one of the explanations for such a state of affairs might lie in the degree of choice and number of options available to the female members of these groups.

2.2 Status of Women In the Chamarajanagar area, as in other parts of India, there is no sharp divide between high and low castes, but a gradual, intensely disputed continuum, a sort of communal free-for-all, between the Brahmans at the top and the Untouchables at the bottom. Nevertheless in so far as the status of women is concerned, a discernible cleavage is revealed between 'high' and 'low' caste ideals. Where there is institutionalised divorce for both sexes and remarriage after divorce or widowhood for both sexes, women may also work and earn outside

the household, go out at will and unaccompanied (except perhaps by female friends), have much more choice as to marriage partner, and may desert a bad husband and return to their natal households without bringing dishonour on their parents or agnatic kin. In these groups, all at the low end of the caste continuum, there is no very strong and ritually prescribed involvement with questions of female subordination and 'purity', and the birth of girls is even welcomed. M.N. Srinivas, himself a Mysorean, confirms that the relationship between men and women in the lower castes is more egalitarian than it is in the high castes, and that when lower castes, or individual members of lower castes, try to achieve upward mobility by what he has called 'sanskritisation' (i.e., the emulation of Brahmanic customs and values), one of the consequences is the lowering of the status and restriction of the liberty of the women in such castes or households (Srinivas 1962; 1975). This division between high and low caste ideals in gender relations echoes a like dichotomy between north and south India, reflected in demographic performance as revealed by census figures. Tim Dyson and Mick Moore, while observing that the normative differences between North and South are of course a matter of degree, none the less describe the process of 'sanskritisation' in terms of the encroachment of north Indian values on those of south India. The more closely members of a south Indian high caste adhere to Brahmanic principles, the more their culture resembles that of north Indian high castes in its denigration and subordination of its female members (Dyson and Moore, 1983).

In the analysis I made of the kinship and marriage norms of the six representative castes to determine the status of women in these groups, the dichot-

omy was clear-cut. In the case of the three jati whose claim to be high-caste was undisputed, both as to attribution and interaction, women were more or less restricted (according to the degree of orthodoxy or alternatively of modernity practised by the household head), and had no right to divorce or to re-marry after widowhood, although the men could and often did re-marry after a wife's death. According to the traditional dictates of their culture women in these three communities are not supposed to work outside the household or to go out at all unless accompanied by male or elderly female agnatic relatives, are expected to treat their husbands 'as gods', to be perpetually subordinated to them and to have no separate existence other than as child-bearing and food-preparing adjuncts to the spouses. In these castes there is, not surprisingly, a strong perception of female inferiority along with an equally strong emphasis on and anxiety about the 'purity' of the females in the family. In the case of the three lower-caste groups, on the other hand, divorce for both sexes is traditionally institutionalised, as is remarriage for both sexes. Subsequent marriages, called kuduvali, although less prestigious than the first, confer exactly the same rights on children and to inheritance. In these groups women are expected to work and earn, and usually do so, whether the work is in the family fields or for an employer on the land or in a factory. Since daughters and wives contribute financially by their labour to the family income and daughters' weddings do not cost much (indeed among the Harijans and Sholigas the groom's family gives thera or bridewealth, which pays for the feast and the bride's ornaments and represents compensation to her family for her loss), it is not surprising either that there is no very strong perception of female inferiority. Nor is constant vigilance on behalf of her virginity or married 'purity' easily maintained when a woman goes off every

day to work, which may account for the non-puritan attitude of both sexes in these groups. One of our informants told the interviewer without embarrassment that she had become pregnant before her marriage.

In view of the inference I drew from the genealogies collected in the course of my previous fieldwork that the Sholigas (and perhaps the Upuligas and Harijans as well) seemed to have smaller families than did the non-Westernised higher castes, it was postulated that the relative freedom and mobility of lower-caste women, along with their ability to support themselves, might enable them to contrive situations deemed to reduce the periods when they would be at risk of pregnancy, and possibly also to use other traditional means of birth control.

2.3 Economic Status The World Fertility Survey (W.F.S.) and virtually all other demographic literature stresses an inverse relationship between economic status and fertility. J.C. Caldwell has in addition re-stated demographic transition theory in economic terms, suggesting that fertility behaviour is in general rational; that as long as wealth flows from children to parents it makes economic sense to have large families; and that only when social change operates to reverse the flow will fertility be restricted (Caldwell 1976;1980). It seemed likely that among the Chamarajanagar élite, who are nearly all members of high caste communities as well as possessing high incomes and who are busy educating their children at considerable expense, the transition was already taking place, but since this would not account for the apparent low fertility of the most poverty-stricken (in monetary terms) of the local jati, the intervening factor of female status was believed to be operative.

2.4 Education. The W.F.S. and other demographic literature also places great emphasis on the salience of education, especially of women, as a determinant of fertility. J.C. Caldwell maintains that mass education is the principal cause of demographic transition in developing countries (Caldwell 1980). In common with such authorities as Robert Cassen, (1978), he concludes that the most profound changes in this field come about through the granting and acceptance of equal education for both sexes, leading to the influence on family relationships of educated mothers. In Chamarajanagar this variable is closely linked not only with caste, (in general it can be stated that while by no means all members of high castes have completed secondary education, comparatively few members of low castes have any education at all), and with female status, but also with economic status. Higher education in India is expensive, and the loss of a working member of the household, plus the necessity for his or her upkeep at an inevitably higher standard of living than is normal for the family, is costly to the poor even when a scholarship has been gained. Education is highly regarded and greatly desired by members of most, but not all, communities in the taluk. A high-caste respondent whom I asked whether he thought education or the ownership of property the more desirable attribute in seeking a bridegroom for his daughter, replied firmly "Education is the best property". Informants who believed in female education expressed themselves in the same idiom whether they had in mind a career for their daughter, hoped to find an educated husband for her, or simply approved of educated wives as both companions and good mothers. Of the few educated women I met in Chamarajanagar, all had small families and were using modern contraception. Yet at the same time a respondent from the community which I suspected of having the fewest

children replied in answer to the same question, "Of what use is that kind of education to us living in the jungle ?". Once more it seems that the association between education and fertility is indirect, and my research hypothesis suggested that only when education brings about a change in the cultural perceptions of a family or a whole community on the rôle of women can it affect fertility.

2.5 The Value of Children It seemed on the whole indisputable that at present every Indian couple wants children, especially male children, for a number of obvious reasons: support in old age; help in the family fields, business or household; to carry on the line; to fulfil the expectations of affines and neighbours; to retain the respect of the community; and above all to love and to cherish. But apart from the town élite mentioned above in the context of issue 2.3 above, I had reason to believe that today even impoverished or orthodox married couples in the taluk did not necessarily want many children and that many women dreaded the prospect of further pregnancies, births and responsibilities. In the past I had been approached repeatedly by informants of both sexes complaining of the difficulties, especially those involving poverty and ill-health, caused by their having produced "too many children". I had also been approached far too often for comfort by desperate women begging for "medicine" with which to abort yet another unwanted pregnancy or to prevent any further pregnancies. That this evidence of fear and anxiety at the prospect of "the physical impact of an indefinite number of pregnancies or births" is not confined to Chamarajanagar is confirmed by J.C. Caldwell for another district of Karnataka (Caldwell, 1982)

2.6 Contraceptive Practice and Traditional Family Planning. It was predicted that while most

of the Westernised (and by corollary well off) high caste couples would practise modern methods of contraception, orthodox high caste couples where the wife's only means of gaining esteem and standing was through the production of children, especially sons, would use no form of family planning other than the traditional ones of post-partum abstinence for the period customary in the community, and permanent abstinence when their eldest children were likely to start their own families. It was also expected that such traditional practices as lengthy lactation, post-partum abstinence and abortion would be used by the lower-caste women to attempt to control their own fertility, and indeed by those of higher castes who, with or without the concurrence of spouses and/or affines, felt that they had proved themselves sufficiently in this sphere.

2.7 Wife's Age at Effective Marriage; Duration of Marriage. In view of the accepted importance of these factors as determinants of fertility it was clearly essential that they should be investigated in the Chamarajanagar case, and provision was made to deal with them in the questionnaire.

2.8 Early-Age Mortality I have borrowed the usage of Dyson and Moore (1983) to cover perinatal, infant, and child mortality. The importance of this issue has been stressed by most demographic studies dealing with developing countries, since the traditional theory of demographic transition suggests that the lower the chances are of the survival of their progeny the more children are needed to compensate for the risk. As one Indian demographer puts it, "Most parents would have fewer children if there were an assurance that the children would survive". (Chandrasekhar, 1972, p.233). Whether or not cause and effect are really so neatly articulated (cf. Balakrishnan, Scrimshaw and Preston, 1978, and Wyon, 1979, mentioned below), the Mysore Population Study/

the Mysore Population Study shows that in 1951 the infant mortality rate in rural areas of the State for the families of agricultural labourers was 159 per 1000 live births. But, where child mortality is still high it does not follow that completed family size will be large in spite of unrestricted fertility for the very reason that not all the children born survive their childhood, and as Preston and Scrimshaw point out (see below) there is no reason to suppose that they are automatically replaced or that contingency family-size plans are commonly made allowing for x number of deaths. Consequently it was postulated that high early-age mortality might account for the apparently smaller families of the poor communities (which generally consist of the low castes) in this area. That is to say, these communities appeared to have fewer children than did the orthodox members of high caste communities, who were as a rule in a better position to protect their offspring from disease and to procure the best medical treatment for them. In the case of the Westernised members of high caste communities it was assumed that their apparently smaller families would be due to their use of modern contraceptive methods.

2.9 Consanguinity. Nearly all castes in the region (as in most parts of south India), value cross-cousin and elder sister's daughter marriage, whether classificatory or uterine. This preference is associated with the close and enduring ties that exist between sisters and brothers in these regions. The ideal is for the links between female and male siblings to be reinforced by the marriage of their children or or a girl to her mother's younger brother. In view of R.N. Reid's contention that repeated

consanguineous marriage is associated with lower effective fertility (Reid, 1971), it was suggested that this kinship institution might have an effect on the family size of most castes in the taluk.

2.10 Health and Nutrition. There is a good deal of covert promiscuity among the lower caste communities and very little - at least so far as the wives are concerned - among the high castes. In view of Moni Nag's claim that sterility due to venereal disease is a dominant factor affecting fertility in a number of non-industrial societies with unstable marriage and lenient attitudes towards sexual morality, (Nag, 1962), it was predicted that this might account for the apparently smaller families of the Upuligas and Harijans. It was not suggested that the same might be true of the Sholigas because, though promiscuity is not uncommon in their society among themselves, they have hitherto always been cut off from contact with both foreigners in general and other Indian groups. It was predicted that child mortality among Harijans and Upuligas would be due principally to insanitary conditions in their villages or 'quarters' in the town, and also to infectious diseases; and among the Sholigas to the cold and wet climate of the hills during the north-east and south-west monsoons. Since the question of a direct relationship, if any, between malnutrition and fertility is a controversial one, and nutritionists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and at the Community Health Department at St. John's Hospital, Bangalore, had advised me that malnutrition was unlikely to have had any direct effect on fertility in Chamarajanagar, this issue was left open. It was accepted, however, that impoverished and exhausted mothers without household help or amenities would, as Ann Sharman points out, (Sharman, 1970), lack the time, energy and knowledge

to feed their children properly and that child malnutrition could thus contribute to early-age mortality in the area.

(3). The Hypotheses.

3.1 Of the three central hypotheses crucial to the research as originally proposed, the first assumed that the various communities comprising the local model of the caste system in Chamarajanagar taluk would be differentiated not only by their ritual and economic status but also by their cultural norms, and that these norms, in the realm of kinship and marriage, could have a correspondingly differential effect on fertility.

3.2 The second hypothesis suggested that, contrary to the findings of most demographic research in developing countries, it appeared to be the most impoverished and illiterate group in the taluk which had the least number of living children per couple. It was also suggested that this could well be the case among two other large and in the main poor and uneducated communities in the taluk.

3.3 The third hypothesis presumed that in this area, as in others, the status of women would have an effect on fertility, and further specified that this status would be governed by the values of members of the local communities concerned, whether traditional or as influenced by modern education, especially the higher education of women.

It seemed a reasonable prediction that these variables, in combination with those listed above, would be found to have a major influence on fertility in Chamarajanagar.

As I hope to demonstrate in the chapters dealing with data analysis, the original hypotheses were largely confirmed. (i) Caste, in the sense of jati or local community, the chief independent and

antecedent variable, was found to have a definitive effect on fertility in two ways: firstly, in the case of the Sholiga community their cultural values appear directly to affect their fertility through the autonomy of the female members of the community; while secondly, in the case of the higher caste-groups, the effect is indirect, operating through a more complex causal chain. The latter can be summed up as follows. On the whole, what Anil Bhatt calls 'status summation', i.e., where the caste, economic class and power stratification systems of a given region coincide (Bhatt, 1975), still exists in a modified form in Chamarajanagar. The local higher caste communities tend to have many more affluent members, who are thus able to afford the modern education for their children which so often leads to a liberalisation of values, which in turn transforms traditional perceptions of the female rôle. In addition, educated husbands and wives, or those whose expectations and hopes include the achievement of education, desire to invest in the academic future of their children, and this, as Caldwell points out, puts an economic brake on fertility (Caldwell op.cit. 1976,1980). (ii) It turned out that the most impoverished of the three lower-caste groups, the Sholigas, did in fact have the smallest families and the lowest number of children of all the six representative groups in our sample. (iii) It was also established that the status of womenin our area, in so far as it affects their self determination,appears to have a decisive influence on their fertility. (cf. Dyson and Moore 1983, to be discussed below). On the one hand Sholiga women, the most independent of all those interviewed in our sample, turned out to have the smallest families, and on the other all the well-educated women in our sample also had small families. Since the Sholiga women were all totally illiterate, it is clear that education is only influential as a factor in the reduction of fertility where it generates sufficient self-respect and self-sufficiency/

self-respect and self-sufficiency in wives and respect for or at least tolerance of these attributes in their husbands to enable the wives to make their own decisions as to the number of children they wish to have without fearing the disapproval of relatives, affines, and the community as a whole. These findings will of course be discussed circumstantially in the relevant chapters below.

The part of the second hypothesis which is not substantiated, namely the suggestion that the other two lower caste communities (Upuligas and Harijans) might also have fewer children per couple than did the un-Westernised higher castes, may have been due to my having concentrated in the course of my previous fieldwork on the genealogies of older informants in these groups. The purpose of this was to obtain details of the marriage patterns of their children and even their grandchildren, since their knowledge of ascending generations seldom extended beyond that of their parents. But families of older lower-caste people in the taluk tended in the past to have been decimated by diseases such as smallpox, cholera and bubonic plague, which were endemic in the villages of the area even twenty years ago, and it was the informants' accounts of mortality in their own households as well as the narrow lateral spread of genealogies, which led to my earlier assumption. This assumption was sustained, I may add, by some of the huge families I came across, with a wide lateral spread in their genealogies, among the orthodox higher castes. By this I do not mean that they all lived in joint rather than nucleated families, though this of course tended to be the case as well, but simply that people in these groups tended to have a lot of children or of living siblings.

Certainly far more low-caste (which is still more or less synonymous with poor), children survive today than was the case in the fifties, as two population

macro-studies in Karnataka testify, (U.N. 1951 and Bangalore Population Centre 1975). As already mentioned, in 1951 the infant mortality rate among agricultural labourers in rural areas was 159 per 1000 live births, while at the same period those living under improved conditions had a mortality rate of only 95 per 1000 live births. In urban areas where the rate was 100 per 1000 the rate dropped to 58 when housing was improved. D.M. Heer points out that economic development accompanied by a rise in the standard of living raises fertility (Heer, 1975). The average standard of living of the higher castes still compares favourably with that of the lower, but the eradication of two of the great killer diseases and improved medical services have resulted in more lower caste children surviving, while at the same time the inroads of modern education on the values of orthodoxy have played their part in reducing the average family size of higher caste couples. To put it another way, it is possible that this part of the hypothesis fell foul of demographic transition.

As a matter of interest the mean current family size per couple for the whole sample was remarkably low (2.86, the mode being 3) for a rural region of India, in view of the fact that in the previous decade the average fertility rate for the country as a whole was 6.1 births per woman (Cassen and Dyson, 1976). It does appear, if we are to accept the word of the very high percentage of those surveyed in the course of the project under discussion who claimed to be currently using some form of fertility regulation, traditional or modern, that the message of the family planning campaign, supported from an unlooked-for quarter by rising inflation and unemployment, has had a noticeable effect over the past decade. (cf. J. Knodel 1977, noted below). Concurrently, judging by the number

of respondents and other informants who claimed to be planning to educate their children of both sexes, Chamarajanagar seems to be in a late state of demographic transition, both traditional and Caldwellian.

THE LITERATURE

(1). Fertility in India

To be precise, this heading simply embraces a selection of demographic publications on population and fertility deemed relevant to this thesis. The volume of writing on Indian population problems is awesome, and necessitates not only selectivity but an attempt to trace the changing patterns of themes and attitudes as new dimensions of the subject have emerged over time. In brief, there seems to have been a gradual shift of emphasis since Indian independence from conventional 'head-counting' KAP(knowledge and practice) studies, through stress on the urgent intensification of the family planning campaign (accepting without question the principle of 'population control') to debate on the whole issue. It seems that early studies were based on those carried out by and in Western countries and were thus based on alien parameters and premises. It was only when the data itself proved unproductive that social scientists and policy makers started to wonder what was going on. It was not until the importance of the cultural context began to be accepted that the second generation of research got off the ground.

Around 1975, the first year of the 'Emergency', the conventional wisdom began to be challenged.

Denial and self-doubt led to dispute, and the literature thereafter falls into roughly two categories, 'for' and 'against' population control. Disagreement on both the ethics and the semantics of 'development' also arose about this time and continues, along with the family planning controversy, to this day. Most recently new voices have been raised advocating micro-research, detailed small-scale studies such as the one under discussion here, concentrating on the cultural connotations of fertility, and the results of some studies of this type have already been published. Nor is this likely to be the final stage in the dialectic of fertility, since there is no evidence to show that the problem will conveniently fade away under the influence of a proliferation of micro-studies into some ideal future sunset. Rather, the reverse is possible, since the cultural map of India presents an infinite variety, and perhaps the solution of the population problems, where they exist, of each cultural centre can only be arrived at in its particular context. On the other hand some very recent analyses, to be discussed below, point to a consistent cultural dichotomy between north (or north-west), and south (or south-east), India, which turns on gender relations and is reflected in differential fertility and demographic performance in general.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to touch upon some of the relevant themes in rough chronological order.

The earliest publication to be discussed here is The Mysore Population Study (U.N. 1951). This, the first major study of its kind to be undertaken in India, is still an impressive and useful document.

The researchers noted that knowledge and practice of modern contraception was at the time rare in rural India and uncommon even in the cities. Two opposing tendencies emerged: on the one hand a higher age at marriage among the more educated in the late 1940s and early 1950s was reducing fertility in this group, while on the other hand the reduction of mortality in the same decade was resulting in less or shorter widowhood and therefore in higher fertility within those castes which forbid remarriage to widows. It was reported that few of the respondents regarded a very large family as a blessing, and that many of those who already had children feared that a further growth of their family would mean a reduced standard of living and fewer opportunities for the present children. In general the authors convey the impression that an extension of the family planning campaign and increased availability of modern contraceptives would lead inevitably to a reduction of the birth rate.

That this view was over-optimistic was put forward as early as 1959 by K. Dandekar, who observed that family planning tended to be used by couples who already had a number of living children and who in the past may have resorted to permanent abstinence (Dandekar, 1959). The authors of The Khanna Study (Wyon and Gordon, 1971), which describes a highly organised American project which attempted to introduce modern family planning techniques in an area of the Punjab and to note the results over time, had to admit failure, although they believed that attitudes towards family size seemed to be in transition as the education of girls as well as boys began to be regarded as an asset. They concluded that until child mortality - or at least that of male children - could be reduced parents would continue to have more than two or three children so as to ensure the survival of the next generation.

S.N. Agarwala's summary of Indian demographic statistics (Agarwala, 1972), estimated that the average Indian couple is likely to want no more than four children and to accept family planning once they have achieved that optimum figure. He is in no doubt about the validity of the family planning programme, but lays down guiding principles as to the philosophy which should inform it. The community must feel the need for it; the parents alone must decide on the number of children they want; People should be approached through respected leaders and media; the service should be a part of the medical and public health services and be available as near as possible to the people. In the same year another of India's leading demographers drew the attention of the country's planners to the effect of infant mortality on fertility. Pointing out that high mortality leads to shorter birth intervals, and that it is the overburdening and undernourishment of the mother which so often leads to infant morbidity and death, he concludes that better nutrition for both mothers and children "....may prove in the long run to be the best contraceptive" (Chandrasekhar, 1972, p.233). Nevertheless he believes in the need for "mounting a campaign to qualify the right to produce", (p.233) and feels that it should be obligatory for Indian married couples of the future to limit their family size to two or three children no matter what the local religious and/or cultural compulsions are to the contrary.

In the following year M. Mamdani published his counterblast, (Mamdani, 1973), in which he singles out The Khanna Study for attack, although many of the conclusions of that work are similar to his own. Basically his argument is that people in rural India have large families because they are poor. In the Punjab village he cited as his example poor farmers, he says, claimed

that to survive they must raise a family to provide the labour to run the farm. If they wished to expand their acreage or to save they must produce enough children for one to be spared to work for wages. To use birth control would thus be to court economic disaster. Mamdani's position has attracted a number of adherents whose views endorse his to varying degrees. Thus about half the contributors to the volume, Population in India's Development (Bose, Desai, Mitra and Sharma [eds], 1974), published by the Indian Association for the Study of Population, represent a body of opinion against family planning, while the other half are for it. In his contribution P.C. Joshi associates himself with Mamdani in his claim that the idea of over-population is a myth created by the dominant nations. The use of modern technology to bring about a massive increase in gainful employment, along with a redistribution of assets, would, he submits, absorb the surplus population. Once these institutional changes have been brought about,

> "...the poorer classes can be induced... to prefer small numbers of children when they are liberated from the compulsion of seeking security through their own family structure...." (p.84). A.R. Desai

also offers a Marxist solution, the implication of which is that social ownership of the means of production for meeting the assessed needs of the people would provide the sense of security at present felt by the poor to be only achieved through the production of sons. Whether or not India would really benefit from a communist régime - and the past performance of Kerala gives some indication that it might - one cannot resist alluding, a little unkindly, here to the draconian system of compulsory birth control introduced recently by Communist China, including the limitation of urban couples to one child apiece. (cf. The Guardian, July 1st. 1982). It seems

It seems that population problems do not after all go away as the result of a shift in political power. Meanwhile, though Joshi and Desai are against population control they do not argue specifically the case for an increase in population. This perspective is presented by S. Swamy in his paper in the same collection. He stresses the benefits to be accrued from growth, such as a larger proportion of youthful citizens, more opportunities for innovation and technological change, a greater demand for products, and alleges that the cost of providing adequate food and other supplies for the population would be less than the cost of trying to control its increase.

Swamy's arguments are countered in the same volume by those of A. Khosla, who puts forward the ecological case for population control. Observing that, among other decrements, the felling of trees has been proceeding at an accelerating pace in India, he warns that "....the rate of depletion of our forests is a particularly sensitive indicator of the direct pressure of population on our resources," and insists that "....there are sound ecological and social reasons which put a limit on the number of people a given situation (land, area, resources etc.,) can in the long term support" (Khosla, op. cit. 1974, pp 54-55). Certainly the situation in the area of Chamarajanagar and the deterioration in the environment perceptible over the past quarter-century, during which period the population has nearly doubled, seems to uphold Khosla's contention. I will return to this theme later.

In Djurfeldt and Lindberg's Pills Against Poverty (1975), the authors claim that the area of Tamilnadu which they studied was not overpopulated, since, "If the productive forces of Thaiyur agriculture was fully developed the village could accommodate

twice its population," and "They starve because they are exploited and denied their just share of the cake" (p.203). The theme of this book is once more that of the necessity for institutional change: the people will not improve their health by consuming allopathic (modern or 'Western') drugs but by improving their economic lot, and this can only be achieved by "getting rid of the parasitical system which now oppresses them" (p.101). The authors also state that the average Thaiyur woman bears about seven children, including the ones who die, whom she spaces by long lactation while she continues to work in the fields and at home. It is important to have children, say Djurfeldt and Lindberg, so that they support the parents when they grow old. However, while the plight of childless old people is indeed pitiable, so is that of women subjected to the stresses of constant childbearing, especially in the conditions of rural India. It is not clear whether the views of the women themselves were canvassed or whether the authors are simply endorsing a collective representation. While their intention may have been to show that a more democratic system would automatically lead to a reduction in the birth rate, the polemical jargon in which much of their argument is couched sometimes tends to obscure their meaning.

In this context the results of a survey undertaken by M. & C. Vlassoff in a Gujerati village are interesting. They showed that few people lived long enough to be completely dependent on their offspring, and provided evidence to the effect that security in old age was assured through the possession of economic resources rather than of sons (Vlassoff & Vlassoff, 1980).

In his comprehensive overview of India's population complexities (Mandelbaum, 1974), D.G. Mandelaum reviews those cultural practices which may affect fertility, from the age of effective marriage to permanent abstinence when

the children begin to raise their own families. In the process he reverts several times to the contradiction between private interest and public welfare. Observing that one of the dilemmas facing Government efforts towards fertility reduction is that "...those babies who are a planner's worry are the parents' hope and joy" (p.110), he suggests that one of the most efficacious solutions to this dilemma would be the education and consequent emancipation of women.

N.J. Demerath is an American demographer who supports the view that India's present official policy of promoting family planning should be abandoned in favour of institutional change (Demerath 1976). He advocates what he calls "the societalist approach", that is, the inculcation of such socio-economic and cultural changes as raising the age of marriage and otherwise trying to modify factors which affect fertility. He insists that this should go hand-in-hand with "....the transformation of some of India's primary institutions". Unless such changes, in the fields of property, employment, women's rights, the distribution of wealth and social justice for the poor and deprived come about repeated failures of the family planning programme "...will generate...pressures for institutional change such that existing élites will be forced out of power" (pp.84-85).

Two papers on population which appeared in India's 'Economic and Political Weekly' in 1976 endorse the arguments of Mandelbaum and Demerath. One, by R.H. Cassen, was based on material for his book to be published two years later, of which more below. The other was T.N. Krishnan's 'Demographic Transition in Kerala' (Krishnan 1976). Both are convincing on the need for women's emancipation in India. Krishnan concludes that the drop in the birth rate in the State of Kerala was

principally due to two major factors: the decline in the infant mortality rate consequent upon Kerala's having the best health and welfare service in India; and the rise in the average age at marriage, which he suggests was due to Kerala's achievements in the field of female education.

The Bangalore Population Study of 1975, a survey undertaken by the Population Centre, Bangalore, covered the same districts of Karnataka which were surveyed by the Mysore Study and provided the opportunity to examine the effects of social change on fertility in the intervening years. An instructive paper comparing the results of the two surveys, (Srinavasan, Reddy and Raju, 1977), was subsequently published by the Population Centre. The authors discovered that the birth rate had not declined as much as might have been expected in view of substantial reductions in infant mortality and increases in literacy, combined with an intensive family planning programme over the period. They suggested that this was due partly to the abandonment of traditional methods of family planning, which resulted in shorter birth intervals. While age-specific fertility rates of married women above the age of thirty had been considerably reduced, those of women below thirty had actually increased, a situation which had not been envisaged by the planners.

Reflecting on some of the reasons put forward to account for the relative failure of India's family planning programme, (e.g., shortage of trained staff, adverse psychological effects of some techniques), Darrell Jackson's views echo those expressed by the doubters in the early 1970s (Epstein and Jackson, [eds], 1977). Demographic variables, he remarks, tend to derive from the socio-economic environment. Increased agricultural productivity and the intensification of agricultural reform "should be cardinal points in any development strategy..

..which includes an integrated population policy". (p.10). People are more likely to limit their fertility, he concludes, "....if they have the opportunity to control and participate in the processes which govern their lives" (p.14). His co-editor, Scarlett Epstein, agrees.

> "From our studies it emerged that people need to be given the opportunity to shape their own lives as well as those of their offspring before they are prepared to plan the number of their children" (p.236)

Monica Das Gupta's paper in the same volume argues that among the chief agents for change resulting in reduced family size are: contact with urban norms; education for both sexes; and full employment, especially for women. (cf. Dyson and Moore below). V.K. Jairath's contribution shows how technological change, bringing increased prosperity to the villages of his study, was instrumental in reducing the birth rate. The introduction of tube wells increased productivity so greatly that small farmers can now afford to hire rather than to breed labour and therefore do not want large families any more. This tends to uphold Mamdani's theory that farmers have large families because they are poor.

In 1978 R.H. Cassen's magisterial anatomy of India appeared. Cassen cites two crucial factors which should go a long way towards solving India's problems: large-scale, adequately rewarded, employment and co-operative self-help. "Even the population question itself may find its answer in this context; perhaps only when communities work for the collective good and take responsibility for their own numbers will those numbers be sensibly regulated by voluntary means. As it is, life in the village is not co-operative but competitive" (Cassen 1978, p.337). Although Cassen's conclusion is that India's difficulties are not likely to be cured by any solutions short of radical change involving institutional upheaval, he nevertheless points out the defects in Mamdani's reasoning. For instance, most of Mamdani's informants referred to the economic benefits accruing from having sons. But half their children were daughters, and in north India daughters are economically disadvantageous.

Therefore as some couples had only daughters, surely it would be courting economic disaster for them to have any children at all. Cassen contends that there is a demand for family limitation in India which is not in fact being met, and in the light of my Chamarajanagar experience, I cannot but agree with him. He also deplores the fact that female education, which is consistently related to fertility reduction in nearly every country in the world, is such a neglected feature of development in most Indian States.

Shortly before Cassen's book appeared a new arrival on the demographic scene (although well-known and respected in the related field of anthropology), entered the arena advocating a different approach to the study of the 'population question'. In 1977 M.N. Srinivas produced a paper for the Family Planning Foundation which deplored the folly of ignoring the fact that fertility is everywhere bound up with other aspects of local culture, and "....the futility of action programmes which set aside the sentiments and values of the people." The author and his collaborator call for detailed studies at the micro-level, declaring roundly that,

> "In sum, fertility has escaped serious treatment in village studies in spite of their holism, and demographic research, in spite of its impressive volume, has failed to place fertility behaviour in its proper social and cultural context" (Srinivas and Ramaswamy, 1977, p.8).

Some micro-studies, including this research, which do pay attention to the way in which fertility is related to community norms have in fact been undertaken in relatively recent years. These include that of R. Anker which compared the mores and attitudes of a high and low caste in Gujerat. He found that although education was an important determinant of fertility, the really crucial predictor of family planning acceptance in both his groups was the number of living sons per couple. He concluded that until Gujeratis could be dissuaded from the felt need for more than one son the birth rate was not likely to be greatly reduced (Anker, 1973). Thomas and Shirley Poffenberger's publications (Poffenberger 1969, 1973, 1976) were also based on research in rural Gujerat.

The authors found that though the 'ideal' family among all the castes they studied was two sons and a daughter, the hard facts of early-age mortality required most couples to have more than three children for the ideal number to survive to maturity. Nevertheless, the economic pressure of having an increasing number of living children to be fed, clothed and educated was beginning to alter the attitudes of fathers towards a smaller family-size norm, and to affect the viewpoints of their older children. Thus the beginnings of demographic transition seem to be traceable in the area, both in the previously accepted sense and in that of J.C.Caldwell (op.cit. 1976).

A more recent village study is that of K. Mahadevan in Tamilnadu (Mahadevan 1977), which, when compared with the findings to be analysed in this thesis, is a striking example of the way in which reproductive behaviour in India varies not only from community to community but within the same communities (jati) in different localities. For example in Mahadevan's Thoppampatti, the most frequent users of modern contraception were the Harijans, the community at the bottom of Mahadevan's caste hierarchy, while the least frequent users were the Gounders, the highest caste in his sample, who also had the smallest number of children per couple. In Chamarajanagar, by contrast, the least frequent users of modern contraception were the lowest castes, while the most frequent users were the Westernised members of high-caste communities. The reason for this situation reversal is, it seems, that the Gounder women studied by Mahadevan still rely on their traditional method of family limitation, induced abortion by means of various abortifacients known to the females of the community. In the same way, as we shall see, the Sholiga community, who had the fewest children in our Chamarajanagar sample, prefer to rely on their traditional methods of birth control. But the Sholigas constitute the lowest

economic group in our area while the Gounders are the highest, or at least the most dominant, of Mahadevan's area. The inference is clear: a general theory of fertility in India cannot fail to run aground regularly on such shoals, and it should not be forgotten by family planners that "...similarity in demographic behaviour may not stem from common causes" (Busfield and Paddon, 1977)

Another study of the effects of certain cultural conventions on fertility, but with a dissimilar slant, is that of R.M. Reid. His research led him to conclude that consanguineous marriage, widely preferred and practised in south India, which can result in inbred offspring who are either sterile or less likely to survive to marriageable age, can be regarded as a regulatory system giving long-term stability to population growth (Reid, 1971). Cross-cousin and elder-sister's-daughter marriages are very common in the Chamarajanagar area, but whether this has actually contributed to the relatively small mean family size found in my sample is another matter. The publications of W. McCormack (1958), A.K. Ghosh (1976), Rao and Inbaraj (1977), and Anthony Good (1980) all attest to the fact that the level of inbreeding is still high in south Indian States. It is true that child/woman ratios (CWRs) have been consistently lower in the South than in north India, the northern States also exhibiting higher total fertility rates (TFRs) than in the South, (cf. Dyson and Moore 1983), but other factors, to be discussed below, are manifestly involved as well.

Reverting, as we enter the nineteen-eighties, to procedures and principles, J.E. Kocher's paper (Kocher 1980), is a curiously conservative document. The author agrees with the population projection for India of 922 to 970 million by the end of the century predicted by Cassen and Dyson (1976) and believes that the Government's target of replacement level fertility by 1996 to be unattainable, although he

suggests that several of the more progressive States, which includes those comprising south India are undergoing sustained fertility decline. Thereafter he recommends a number of steps which family planning organisers could take "without alienating voters". These appear to be no more than the mixture as before, including such measures as the reintroduction of family planning incentives and easier availability of techniques other than vasectomony. In view of the growing realisation by demographers, economists, and anthropologists that the population problem is unlikely to be solved except in the contexts of both social reform and cognizance of local and regional cultural values and customs, it is surprising that there is no mention of broader issues. At this point the debate seems to have progressed in a circle.

However, a further perspective has recently been opened up by two books and a paper on the same significant theme, that of a North/South (or northwest/southeast) variation in Hindu culture and its effect on fertility. The first of these works, D.E. Sopher's An Exploration of India (Sopher [ed] 1980), comprises a number of papers dealing with regional differences in culture encountered in the study of human geography in India. Of particular relevance to the North/South dichotomy model is that of M. Libbee, which found that hypergamy, the rejection of marriage to kin, and village and territorial exogamy, all northern Hindu characteristics, contrasted with the southern tendency to prefer marriage to kin, isogamous marriage in general and village or territorial endogamy. He reflects that the north Indian bride, married imto a strange household distanced from her native place which avoids interaction with her natal group, is disadvantaged compared to the south Indian bride, married into a household probably within walking distance of her natal one and very possibly living among relatives

she has known all her life. This difference is strikingly endorsed by my Chamarajanagar data, which showed that the average marriage distance in my village was ten miles. The mean distance would have been much less if it had not been for the presence of some rich households where the wives came from towns over a hundred miles away.

In his own paper D.E. Sopher shows that differential sex ratios for North and South reveal the same pattern of gender relations. That is, the status and the life chances of women is lower in the North, while fertility in the same northern region is higher "Simply put, the Indian population exhibits high masculinity (1072 males per 1000 females in 1971) that is highest in the northwest and decreases towards the south and east" (p.296). The weight of evidence, he adds, "...makes the regional differences in woman's place an aspect of ancient, fundamental differences in Hindu society" (p.300). These findings are well supported in the author's paper in the same volume which shows that the pattern of sex disparity in Indian literacy fits the sex ration pattern to a remarkable degree. Female literacy figures are consistently higher in the South.

Barbara Miller's book, The Endangered Sex (Miller, 1981), confirms the arguments of Sopher et al. Her contention is that it is the neglect of juvenile females as being of little worth - a neglect which today has taken the place of overt female infanticide practised in the not-so-distant past - which accounts for the pronounced masculinity of sex ratios in north, or northwest, India. She suggests that north India is part of a belt stretching from the Mediterranean through the Islamic Middle East and Pakistan which places a low value on the female, and says that this is partly related to costs, including high marriage and dowry expenses for daughters and the low work participation of women who have to be segregated and protected to preserve

the 'honour' of the men. Furthermore in the North women are excluded from inheritance of property. Contrasted with this is the situation in the South, which, she submits, is part of a different culture belt extending through southeast Asia which includes high work participation, low, or comparatively low, marriage expenses and some inheritance of property for women, along with isogamous marriage and a higher value placed on female children.

> "The important part that culture plays in affecting male and female rôles in production and the control of property cannot be over-emphasised. It is culture that dictates the great worth of males as both producers and heirs in much of India, and...undervalues the vital... roles that women play (p.27)

Miller goes on to equate the higher fertility figures in the North with anxiety to produce sons, and observes drily that "Obviously daughter neglect does not completely wipe out the fertility boosting effect of son preference" (p.167).

In their paper, Kinship Structure, Female Autonomy and Demographic Behaviour: Regional Contrasts within India (Dyson and Moore 1983), the authors substantiate the validity of the arguments used by Sopher, Miller, et al. Drawing on census data and that of the Sample Registration System (SRS) they examine sex ratios, child/woman ratios, estimates of total fertility, early-age mortality rates, and regional marriage patterns for the Indian States, and arrive at the same conclusions.

> "...the main States of India can be broadly grouped as falling under one or the other of two basic demographic regimes. In contrast to the north, one finds in the south and east: relatively low overall fertility; lower fertility within marriage; a later age of marriage; lower child mortality; comparatively low ratios of female to male child mortality; and, largely as a consequence, relatively low population sex ratios (P.42)

They then

proceed to link these findings with contrasting cultural norms in north and south India in the fields of kinship and marriage, and conclude that, although the status of women in south India is not particularly high per se, it is a question of degree. It is higher than it is in the North. Behind this estimate of 'worth' lies another concept, that of personal autonomy. "....the capacity to manipulate one's personal environment" (p.45). It is to this higher degree of independence enjoyed by women in the South, (to a greater or lesser degree, depending on region, jati or class), that the authors attribute the "relatively favourable" demographic performance of the South. They conclude that, from a policy point of view, their findings create

> "a strong presumption in favour of broadly feminist modes of social action.. both as an end in itself and as a means to facilitate reduced birth and death rates" (p.54)

The central theme of the last four works reviewed here is that of the effect of female status on fertility. While a great deal has been written on the status of women in India and elsewhere during the past few decades it is only recently that the link between the sex role system and fertility has been widely canvassed. And, although it has frequently been mentioned as an issue by those writing on the subject of Indian population (cf. Mandelbaum, 1974, Cassen, 1978), demographic studies which focus more or less exclusively on this subject in the Indian context are still relatively scarce. Among them are those of Renu Chahil (Chahil, 1977) and of A.K. Jain (Jain, 1981). Chahil's conclusion is rather pessimistic, pointing out as it does that the participation of women in the Indian economy, apart from agricultural labour, declined between 1961 and 1971 with the corresponding decline in household industry, the main bastion of women's employment in the face of mechanisation. But Jain suggests that education

for women will bring about reduced fertility even without increasing opportunities for participation in the work force, because it increases their exposure to ideas and information. The same notion, that of the diffusion of innovation, is implicit as a somewhat different theory in J. Knodel's paper (Knodel,1977), which postulates that demographic transition comes about as the result of acceptance and adoption of new behaviour patterns rather than the adaptation of old ones.

An important contribution to this theme is the cross-cultural collection of papers entitled Women's Roles and Population Trends in the Third World prepared for a conference to discuss an ILO-funded research project, (Anker, Buvinic and Youssef [eds] , 1982). Two of these papers are specifically concerned with India, and the themes of many of them concern the re-thinking of the concept of 'work' to include housework and its relationship to the formal labour market. Another voice consistently urging that attention should be paid to the status of women and the decline in female labour force participation in the context of fertility is that of Ashok Mitra (Mitra,1978,1980).

(2) Some Literature on Fertility Outside, but Relevant to the Indian Case.

Examples of papers which relate the status of women to fertility outside the Indian context are those of Kupinsky (1971), Ware (1976). Birdsell (1976), Ermisch (1977), and Stinner (1980) and of course the chapters in Anker et al. (1982) mentioned above which draw their data from countries in the Third World other than India. Stanley Kupinsky finds labour-force participation of the wife to be negatively associated with fertility, and that working wives of high socio-economic status had fewer children than those of low status, but suggests that this might apply more to women in metropolitan than in rural areas. Ware, however, claims on her Melbourne evidence that "Wives go to work in

order to maintain the children they already have" (p.426). Birdsell's view is one which has been promoted by Cassen, Caldwell and Boserup; female employment is likely to lower fertility not only where the economic value of children is low, but also where the status of (the) employment is high, thus permitting women concepts of their rôle in life over and beyond the rôle of housewife and mother. Ernisch examines the Easterlin hypothesis, that a family's economic status relative to its aspirations is a determinant of fertility, (which incidentally did seem to be the case with at least one of the caste groups surveyed in Chamarajanagar), and reflects that fertility is reduced in situations where women's wages and employment options are rising or have risen. This coincides with the findings of Birdsell mentioned above. Stinner's Korean study revealed that education, urban residence and adherence to the Christian religion all delayed marriage but where marriage was delayed shorter birth intervals tended to preclude fertility reduction. Srinivasan et al., who compared the Bangalore and Mysore population studies, came to the same conclusion on the use of modern contraception along with the abandonment of traditional checks on conception. Among the papers by contributors to Anker et al. (1982), Safilios-Rothschild discusses the two main sources of women's power, that derived from men and that derived from their own productive activities. The latter, she concludes, is the true basis of autonomy. Jelin points out that the availability of women for outside work is related to their status and responsibilities within the household, and asks why housework should be excluded from the social process of production. Papola relates women's employment in urban India to their domestic responsibilities. Mueller and Oppong canvass questions of child-care and time-use, and Youssef suggests that the sexual division of labour can give women control over their own lives.

Most of these studies include or concentrate upon the factor of women's work participation as a determinant of fertility. It seems as if Ester Boserup's

influential book, Women's Role in Economic Development (Boserup, 1970), although not primarily concerned with questions of fertility, has sparked off a considerable volume of deliberation on the subject. She herself wrote,

> "As public propaganda for family limitation..becomes more widespread...we shall expect to see married women in developing countries encouraged to seek employment outside the home as a means of limiting the number of births" (p.224)

She also emphasised the need to give girls other ideals and ways of asserting themselves if the rearing of a large family were no longer considered a virtue.

The accuracy of this prediction is debated in a compendium, The Fertility of Working Women, edited by S. Kupinsky (1977). Here Helen Ware shows that in tropical Africa, where the idea that 'Woman's place is in the home' is not part of the cultural furniture, the high participation of women in the labour force does not result in reduced fertility. V.Hull draws our attention to the effect of class differentiation in Java on the relationship between women's work and fertility. M. Ahdab Yehia does the same for rural areas of the Arab Middle East, pointing out that peasant women work there because they have to, that their pay is less than that of the males and does not bring them independence, and that their work has no effect on their high fertility. The study by J.Salaff and A. Wong of Chinese women in Hong Kong, Singapore and the Chinese People's Republic finds that a strong work motivation, whether due to job satisfaction, high economic reward, or ideology, is often the result of social group pressures on the individual. V. Stolte Heiskanen on Western Europe seems to support this contention. She says that women's participation in the labour force is higher and fertility lower where the society itself is "work-role oriented". Kupinsky's own paper on working women in the United States echoes this thesis, as does E.Szabady on Eastern Europe. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, in her

closely-argued paper, takes issue with the assumption that work outside the home is automatically an indicator of emancipation, thus confirming Ahdab Yehia's estimate. It is the element of choice, she insists, which is the true indicator. This corroborates the testimony of Dyson and Moore (op.cit. 1983), that it is self-determination which is the sign of emancipation. Safilios- Rothschild's point is that fertility is reduced where the woman experiences a high degree of work commitment and finds it hard to reconcile the rôles of worker and mother. "Women's work may not tend to depress fertility as long as it does not provide an alternate and equally important identity" (p.259). Thus as Kupinsky says in his overview, there is no consistent pattern to the relationship between women's work and fertility. "....it is not work per se that is significantly related to lower fertility, but other factors associated with working or not working". Among the inter-related factors are: the concept of the modern woman; commitment to and satisfaction with the worker rôle; elimination of the deviant status attached to non-familial work by the wider society; and "...the social, psychological and economic rewards for working that are perceived (by the woman) as being greater than the rewards for childbearing" (p.377). This in fact is just what Nancy Birdsell and Ester Boserup have pointed out. But perhaps the most apt commentary on what Dyson and Moore and the contributors to this volume have to say is the remark of a Sholiga woman in Chamarajanagar taluk. Asked why she had opted for having only one child, she replied with a shrug, "Well, it's difficult to work when you're pregnant".

Other papers on fertility which are not directly concerned with India but which are relevant to a study of Indian population dynamics, are those by Wrigley, (1966), Douglas, (1966), Birdsell et al.,(1968),

Turnbull, (1972), and Short, (1976). These all concern questions of population control in pre-industrial societies. E. A. Wrigley shows that there was a purposive decrease and subsequent increase of fertility under circumstances causing social and economic stress and their later abatement in pre-industrial England. Douglas, Turnbull and Birdsell speculate on methods used in primitive societies to keep the population in equilibrium with its environment. These include abortion; post-partum abstinence; lengthy lactation; and infanticide, mainly of females and those suffering from physical or ritual (e.g. twins) disabilities. They end up in (implicit) agreement that little is known about birth control in such societies. R.V. Short, drawing on anthropological and demographic studies of societies such as Bushmen tribes, infers that under primitive conditions in the past fertile women must have been in a constant state of pregnancy, lactation or post-partum amenorrhoea, and that a succession of menstrual cycles, such as women avoiding pregnancy today have to undergo, is neither natural nor desirable. Since 'civilisation' and development have removed natural constraints on population density and artificial contraception seems necessary for the survival of the species, he advocates the production of a non-steroidal contraceptive that would allow women to return "...to the reproductive state which was the norm for our primitive ancestors - amenorrhoea" (p.20).

Some more recent studies, each with considerable relevance to the issues deliberated above, are those of Cain (1977), Balakrishnan (1978), Scrimshaw (1978), Preston (1978), Wyon (1979), and Yu (1979). Mead Cain's paper reveals that the kind of changes in production which Jairath (op.cit. 1977) saw as conducive to fertility depression had not yet reached the Bangladesh village of his study. There, high fertility and large numbers of surviving children were still economically rational propositions in view of the financial advantages accruing to

the parents from the economic activities of the village children. T.R. Balakrishnan's study of the effects of child mortality on fertility in four Latin-American countries led to the conclusion that in populations with high fertility and low use of contraception the number of births subsequent to child loss were more a function of "exposure to risk" than to fear of infant mortality. I think this was often the case in Chamarajanagar too, where many informants felt that the coming of children was "God's will" rather than a state of affairs over which they had any control. Cases where child loss did seem to affect subsequent births were usually those in which the parents had been unable to rear any children of one sex or the other and where one or both parents badly wanted a child of that sex. The principal conclusion of the contributors to Preston's volume was that in no society do statistics show as many as 50 per cent of child deaths replaced by an equivalent number of further births. In his introduction he gives a number of reasons why replacement may be incomplete, such as that for any given couple/family size and composition may be totally unplanned and regarded as "God's will", or the desired number of the preferred sex may survive. Scrimshaw reverses the usual arguments, she says that high fertility may lead to early-age mortality, if not by direct infanticide, at least by neglect of unwanted children. These are usually female, but may also be handicapped, 'difficult', unattractive, or high in the birth order. Wyon argues that population control programmes should emphasise maternal and child health services, for which there is a felt need, rather than contraception, which may not be a felt need. Y.C. Yu's paper on methods of population control in modern China is germane to some of the principal topics which have arisen in this stocktaking of the literature on fertility as relevant to this thesis. Besides revolutionary changes in production, employment and the status of women, and along with the development of the public health services, China's intensive family planning programme includes the postponement of marriage, advocation of wide birth intervals, and

the restriction of family size to two children. (And as we have seen, this has been reduced to one child in urban areas, on pain of economic sanctions, according to The Guardian of May 29th and July 1st 1982)

Finally, we come to some studies or papers of general demographic importance which seem to have a particular bearing on the Chamarajanagar research. To deal with these in an order which has more to do with a notional imputation of their salience in the sphere of this study than with chronology, the first is Moni Nag's Factors Affecting Human Fertility (Nag 1962), in which the author examines the way cultural traditions may determine fertility in non-industrial societies. Although Nag's findings had some influence on the hypotheses set out at the start of this chapter they were not all borne out by the results of my data analyses, except in the case of the Sholiga tribe, where long lactation and post-partum abstinence coincided with comparatively low fertility. This may have been because they were the only truly 'non-industrial' group in my sample. But even so Nag's theory that venereal disease is the single most important factor in reducing fertility in such societies is not supported by my data. The group in my sample which had the most potential for VD had the second highest number of children per couple, (i.e. the estate labourers in Group V).

An important, if somewhat reductionist, internationally comparative approach is that of Arnold and Fawcett (1975), on the value of children. Their findings are fairly predictable. For instance sons are preferred in the expectation of support in old age; upper classes see the benefits of children more in emotional and in psychological terms, while lower classes tend to see them more in economic terms; daughters, when wanted, are wanted more for emotional reasons. A contrary standpoint is that of Busfield and Paddon (1977). Joan Busfield writes of her English informants in the same vein as that of Srinivas for India (op.cit. 1977). She finds utilitarian attempts to link economic factors to fertility unsatisfactory because they pay insufficient attention to

personal and individual reactions to the social/cultural/biological situations in which they find themselves. Cost/benefit analyses, she implies, are at once too general and too simplistic to be an adequate base for fertility theories.

Nevertheless, J.C. Caldwell's restatement of demographic transition theory in socio-economic terms (op.cit. 1976), is a document of striking credibility. While conceding that family sizes in differing societies at different times may be determined by personal, sociological, or physiological reasons, he says that the theory of transition proposed by Notestein in 1945 is incorrect in its assumption of irrationality on the part of couples in poor traditional societies. That argument runs thus: in the first or original stage of developing countries high mortality necessitates high fertility for survival of the society. In the second, transitional, stage mortality decreases with improved medical services and technology but fertility remains high because couples are still insuring, so to speak, against child loss. In the third stage conviction of the rationality of reducing fertility in view of low mortality has reached all classes of the population and transition has been achieved. Caldwell's theory is that in <u>every</u> society fertility behaviour is rational, but in traditional societies the inter-generation flow of wealth runs from younger to older generations through the economic contributions of children to the household, while in developed ones adjustment to 'Western' values and conditions, such as modern education and nucleation of households, leads to a reversal of the flow and thus to restriction of fertility. Caldwell's re-statement of the springs of demographic transition was buttressed by a subsequent paper (Caldwell 1980), which showed that there are five mechanisms by which mass education has an impact on fertility: (1) School work reduces the child's potential as a family worker. (2) School expenses and the child's increased expectations increases the cost of children (3) Schooling prolongs dependency. (4&5) Schooling speeds up cultural change, introduces Western middle-class

values and reduces sex differentiation.

Turning finally to the literature concerning the effect of caste on fertility, we are confronted with a surprisingly meagre assortment. The bibliography of caste is immense, and this is not the place - or indeed the area of research - in which to embark on a lengthy dissection of its intricacies, though some of its aspects will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. But comparatively little interest seems to have been taken in the bearing of this ubiquious Indian institution on reproductive behaviour, at least until recently. Many of the analysts and researchers already referred to mention caste - it is difficult not to do so when commenting on Indian society - but only en passant. Of those who have taken caste as an important variable and compared the effects of local community cultures on fertility, the following are the only ones who spring to mind. They have all been mentioned already in this chapter. The Poffenbergers (op.cit. 1969,1973,1976), and Richard Anker (1973), compared the observances of selected high and low castes in Gujerat, relating this behaviour to their socio-economic backgrounds. Some of the contributors to Epstein and Jackson's symposium (op.cit. 1977), notably Jairath and Das Gupta, also discussed comparatively the local jati in their regions of field work. A.K. Ghosh (op.cit.1976), and R.M. Reid (op.cit.1971), confine themselves to a single caste. K. Mahadevan compares the reproductive behavour of three caste-groups in Tamilnadu; and Barbara Miller, Tim Dyson and Mick Moore (op.cit. 1981, 1983), compare north Indian high and low caste fertility figures and behaviour with those of south Indian high and low castes. Lastly, the research dealt with in this thesis compares six caste-groups, involving a selection of jati from the local model of the system. Both Anker and the Poffenbergers found that the desire for sons was the chief obstacle to reduction of family size in their areas. Since these authors carried out their research in Gujerat, one of the States firmly placed in the category of the 'North' posited by Sopher,(op.cit.1980), Miller, (1981) and Dyson and Moore, (1983), this is to be

expected. According to D.F. Pocock the Patidar jati, a high-caste community of the State, were deeply involved in hypergamous marriage relationships which meant that the girls at the top of the 'ladder' were surplus. This had led in the past to infanticide of high-caste girls. (Pocock, 1972). Their findings therefore tend to confirm the theories of those presenting the North/South hypothesis. Reid and Ghosh in their south Indian studies, both find endogamy leading to fertility depression. Mahadevan found that his low caste jati had more children than did the other two groups in his survey because of their fear of early-age mortality and their need for support in old age. Miller, Dyson and Moore, as we have seen, relate thedifferential fertility figures to the status of women. My own research results also showed that the group with the lowest fertility did in fact accord the highest status to women. I found too, that women in the high caste group who were well-educated and 'Westernised', and whose husbands had the same values, enjoyed the personal autonomy and control over their own reproductivity that in most cases led to their having small families. The fact that Miller, Dyson and Moore found that south Indian high castes had somewhat lower fertility than south Indian low castes is partly explained by the increasing spread of education and by corollary of 'Western middle-class values' among these groups, and partly by the south Indian kinship system, with its stress on territorial endogamy, marriage to kin and close ties between affines. Women in orthodox high caste households in south India may be restricted, subordinated and disregarded as wives, but they are loved and valued as sisters and daughters. As a rule they always have recourse to their natal kin, and when a girl marries her mother's brother's son, or her mother's younger brother, she returns to her (mother's) natal home. In any case she is often married to someone she has played with from childhood. Advice and help

over family limitation is thus easily available, and, if my experience in Chamarajanagar is anything to go on, even wives in orthodox joint families thus have access to modern contraceptive techniques and make use of them.

It is to be hoped that the contents of the following chapters will provide confirmation of the major part of the hypotheses presented at the beginning of this introduction, and that they will prove to be of some value in their endorsement or (occasionally) refutation of the arguments set forth in at least a portion of the literature cited herein.

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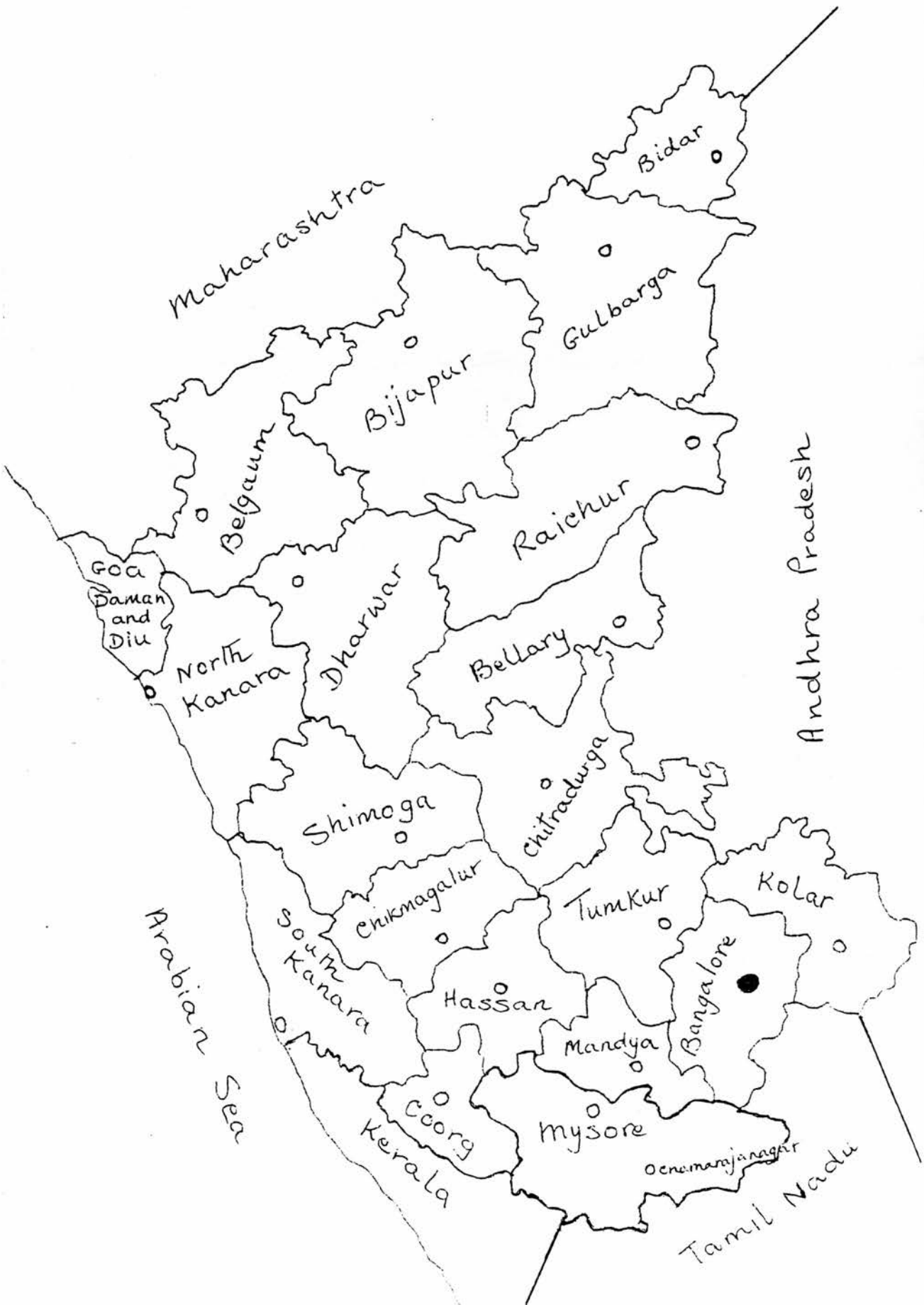
Karnataka, showing administrative districts.
Scale approx. 1: 3,000,000



SECTION ONE: THE CONTEXT

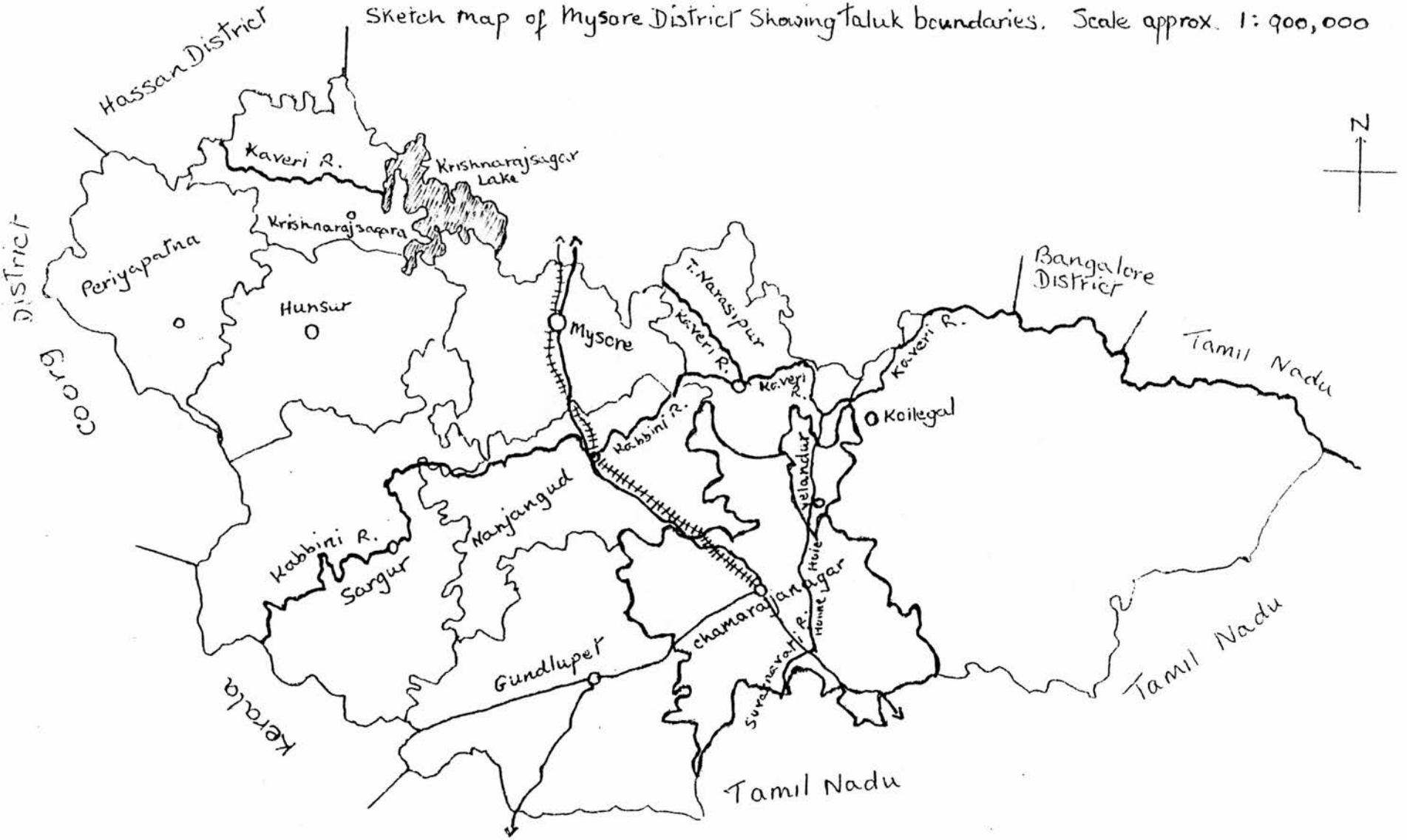
CHAPTER I. Ecological Background

The State of Karnataka, which was formed under the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, covers the south-western end of the Deccan Plateau of peninsular India, and is an extension of the erstwhile princely State of Mysore. It is the eighth largest in area of the twenty-two Indian States, (192,000 square kilometres, of which 48% is cultivated), and has the eighth largest population (about 37 million according to the 1981 census). A relatively rich region, Karnataka currently produces 85% of India's gold; 85% of the country's silk; and 85% of its coffee. (cf 'Commerce', July 1980). Only 24% of the population is urban, and only 32% literate (1971 census figures).

The first historical - or semi-historical - mention of Mysore in Indian literature occurs in Jain accounts and inscriptions, and states that the great emperor Chandragupta, who drove the Macedonians out of India and founded the Mauriyan Empire, eventually abdicated in accordance with Jain obligations and retreated to Mysore to die, in circa 298 B.C. The Mauriyan Empire extended to Mysore at that time (cf Romilla Thapar, 1966), and certainly some of the rock-edicts of Chandragupta's illustrious grandson Ashoka are located in the State.

Of the early dynasties which subsequently ruled Mysore as part of their territories, the Kadambas, Hoysalas and Gangas were essentially native to the State. The Hoysalas, patrons of the architects and master-builders who designed and constructed the fine temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur, ruled the whole State from the 12th century A.D. to the 14th, when they were defeated by the Muslims, and Mysore became part of the famous kingdom of Vijayanagar. In 1610 a local chieftain of the line of Wodeyar ousted the Vijayanagar viceroy at Seringapatna on the Kaveri river a

Sketch map of Mysore District Showing Taluk boundaries. Scale approx. 1: 900,000

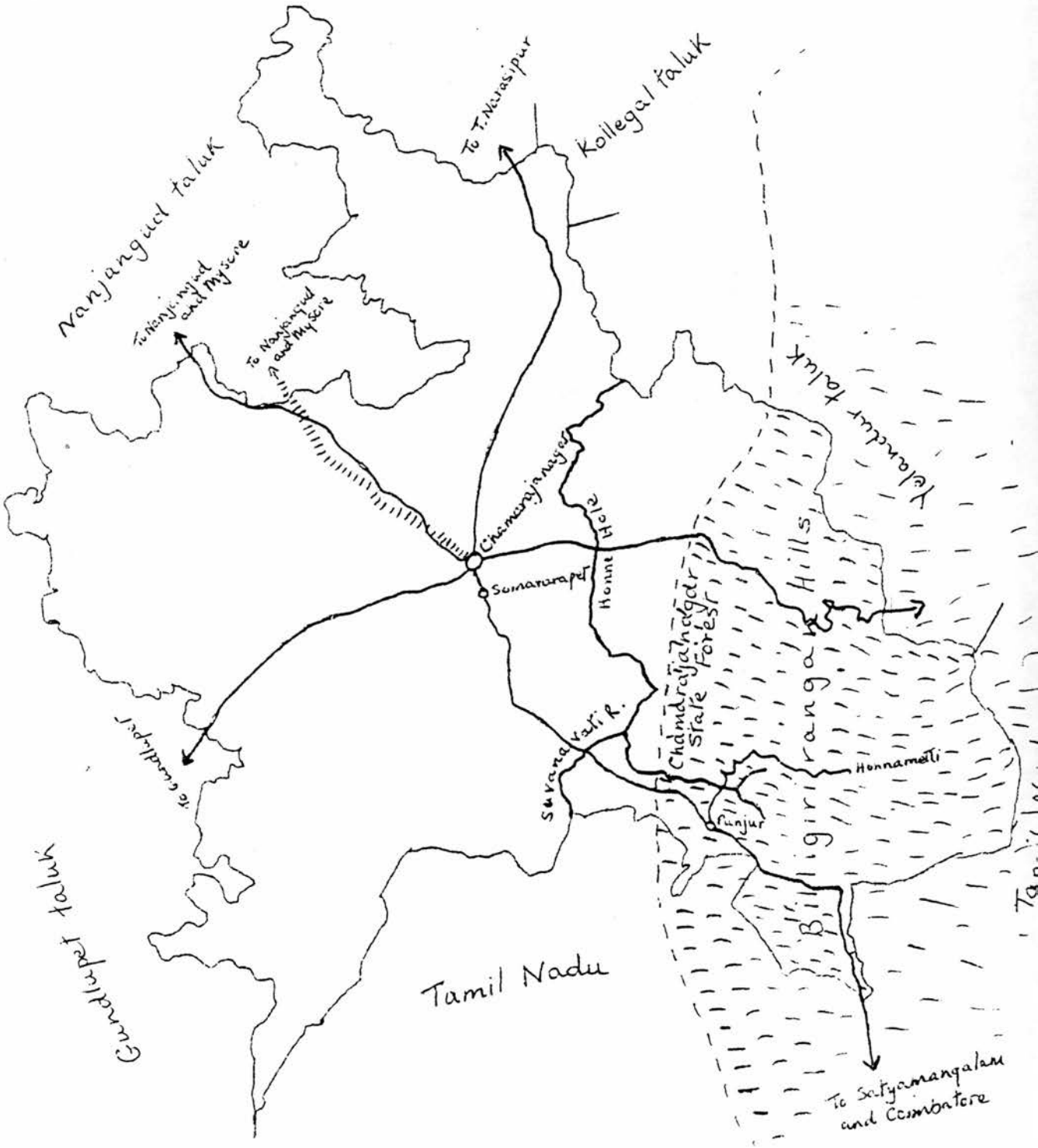


few miles from the present city of Mysore. There are no annals of the dynasty before the time of Chamaraja Wodeyar III, 1515-1552, (though they claim the line goes back to the 12th century), but it henceforth became the dominant power in that part of India. The dynasty ruled from 1610 until the final withdrawal of the privileges and privy purses of the Indian princes in 1972. There was an interregnum during which the incumbents were puppets of the Muslim usurper Haider Ali (1761-1782), and his son Tipu Sultan, killed by the British at the siege of Seringapatna in 1799, but the Wodeyars were reinstated by the British after the death of Tipu.

The town of Mysore, which lies at the foot of a hill called Chamundi, after the tutelary deity of the Wodeyar line, became the capital of the restored dynasty. The present State capital is however the growing industrial city of Bangalore, and Mysore, its romantic palaces converted into museums and tourist hotels, is now merely the centre of a district, the major unit of local administration in India. Every administrative district is further subdivided into a number of taluks, each comprising some hundreds of villages. Mysore district is composed of 11 taluks, including Chamarajanagar, the locus of the field work on which this thesis is based.

The Countryside. Chamarajanagar taluk lies at an altitude of about 2000 feet (709 metres), in the southeast corner of Karnataka, 61 km. from the city of Mysore and 198 km. from the capital, Bangalore. The taluk covers an area of around 1,236 sq. km. and has a population of 227,576 (1971 census figures), 31,000 odd of whom live in the town which constitutes the taluk administrative Headquarters and market-place, and the rest in nearly 200 scattered villages and hamlets. Topographically it consists for the most part of a plain, pimpled

Sketch Map of Chamarajanagar taluk.
Scale approx. 1: 312,000



with small rocky hills and plentifully sprinkled with kere, irrigation reservoirs. This plain, partly watered by a relatively small river, the Honnuhole, which becomes a torrent after heavy rain and feeds a number of irrigation canals, is fairly fertile in years of good rainfall, (mean annual rainfall 667.59 mm.) It stretches to the foot of the Billigirirangan hills, a range rising to 6,000 feet, still mainly jungle-clad and constituting a considerable area of wilderness which has been designated as a wild life sanctuary. Part of this area comprises the Chamarajanagar State Forest. The rest extends into the adjoining taluks of Yelandur and Kollegal, but for the purpose of this study the range has been regarded as an integral unit, forming as it does the eastern boundary of the taluk. Between the range and the heavily cultivated plain is a region of scrub-covered foothills, nominally part of the Hadaranhalli and Yelandur State Forests, but now deeply eroded by creeping cultivation, due to the pressure of increasing population on the land. The forests of the main range, deciduous on the lower slopes and composed of evergreen rain forest above an altitude of about 4,000 feet, contain a good deal of valuable timber such as rosewood, teak, sandalwood and bamboo; while in the two high valleys of the hills lie five coffee plantations or 'estates'. These are approached by a ghat or mountain road which turns off the Mysore-Coimbatore trunk road 15 miles beyond Chamarajanagar town at the forest hamlet of Punjur and winds upwards on a precipitous and stony course where herds of occasionally aggressive elephants are included in the normal hazards.

The economy of the plain is almost entirely agricultural, with the exception of silkworm rearing. The chief subsistence crops are the millets ragi (eleusthine corocana) and jowar (sorghum vulgare), while rice is grown on the valuable 'wet lands' irrigated directly from river, canal or reservoir. The principal cash crops are sugar-cane and

pulses. Coconuts are becoming an increasingly popular fall-back crop, and the same is true of ground-nuts, mulberries for feeding silkworms, and haldi or turmeric, used as a dyestuff as well as a condiment. There are a few factories in the vicinity of Chamarajanagar town which process local products, the largest of these being the Government silk factory, which buys the cocoons raised as a cottage industry in the surrounding villages and produces silk yarn to be sent to the weaving mills of Mysore, Bangalore and Chennapatna. The rest are mainly small ground-nut oil, rice husking and saw mills, and a factory producing unrefined sugar has recently been started outside the town. The chief exports of the taluk are timber from the hills, silk yarn, raw sugar and pulses. Most farms (totes), have their own crushers, boilers and wooden moulds for making the local unrefined block sugar known as bella.

Sugar cane and rice are the two main 'wet' crops. The two millets, the pulses, castor oil and gingelly oil plants, mulberries and turmeric are grown on the 'dry' lands, irrigated from wells or simply watered by rainfall. Paddy or batta (growing, unharvested rice) can also be grown on dry lands if the wells provide sufficient water for irrigation. Like the millets, this is a half-yearly crop, that is, two crops can be grown a year, the paddy being transplanted about August, during the southwest monsoon. In Chamarajanagar subsistence farming is the first priority among the small cultivators who are the majority. They never grow cash crops to the exclusion of food for the household. Sugar cane is, however, an extremely useful all-round crop if the working capital and the labour can be raised to prepare the larger levelled plots (compared to the small paddy terraces). Apart from the acquisition of cash, the household is provided with sugar for the heavily-sweetened tea and coffee preferred in south India, the leaves stripped off the cane before crushing provide fodder for livestock, and the crushed fibres make excellent firing or bedding for cattle. Other crops which supplement the diet of the smallholder and may provide a surplus which can be sold in village or town are, aubergine, okra, radish,

chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. Onions are grown for cash as well as household use. A mango or tamarind tree is a valued possession and provides income, while richer landowners with fertile land can afford a grove of bananas or of the graceful areca palms for betel nuts, the chief ingredient of the pan package. There are also flower crops, jasmine and kannakamba, for garlands and for adorning the hair of women and girls. The breeding of cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats and pigs is only carried out in this area on a small scale, mostly incidental to the main business of agriculture, though a number of women are engaged in the sale of cows' or goats' milk, and the Government is trying to encourage chicken farming on a commercial scale.

The technology used for working the land is fairly simple. Few landowners have tractors, which are expensive to run and liable to go wrong. It is easier to stick to labour-intensive methods. Tube-wells with electric pumps are on the increase, it is true, and every dryland farmer aspires to own one. But only the villages nearer the town are supplied with electricity, and even then it costs a lot to sink the pipe (even into an existing well), have it connected, buy a pump and build a solid, thief-proof pump-house in which to install it. A few farmers have expensive rubber-tyred bullock carts. But most people, if they possess a cart at all, or indeed the bullocks to pull it, manage with the traditional wooden-wheeled cart. The plough still has a wooden share, and a high proportion of small farmers do not own one, preferring to hire a ploughman with his bullocks and plough when fallow land has to be turned over or a change of crop is planned. The ubiquitous utensils are the broad hoe or mamati and the sickle or kathi. Threshing is still mostly carried out by hand flails or trampling oxen on the earthen floors, although an ingenious new method making use of modern transport is to spread the harvested sheaves on the

main road to be threshed by the wheels of passing buses and lorries - a practice causing monumental skids and occasional accidents. In 1974-75 the local Government demonstration farm, virtually barren and surrounded embarrassingly by flourishing examples of private enterprise, did have a ragi-threshing machine, fees for the use of which kept the farm going.

Landholdings vary in size from fractions of an acre to 25 acres and more. Successive attempts to implement land-ceiling legislation over the past quarter century has resulted (theoretically) in the limitation of a holding by any one individual to forty acres of dry land, irrigated, if at all, by well, and ten acres of wet land, irrigated from kere, river or canal, on which water-tax is paid. This means in theory that there are no large landowners. In practice it often means that joint family estates once held in the name of the lineage head are now nominally parcelled out in the names of kin, that tax is paid by the alleged owners on their individual plots, but that profits are still pooled by the co-parceners to pay for joint family running costs, weddings etc. Thus decisions may still be made by the lineage head, unless fission of joint family or lineage has occurred at the time of the nominal fragmentation of the property. This situation can lead to unseemly squabbles among the co-parceners with the increasing segmentation of the lineages. There is, however, nothing very new about such behaviour. Dyadagulu in Kannada means the agnates of a lineage, hence dyad, an opprobrious term meaning one who quarrels.

A point of considerable significance in the context of possible fertility decline in the area is that the average landholding, which was 8 acres in 1951, has now shrunk to two acres according to the Chamarajanagar taluk office. Clearly the poorest cultivator family does not need many children to work a very small plot.

In the past landowners let land to tenants under three different types of tenancy contract, but recent legislation granting the land in perpetuity to tenants on payment of fifteen years land revenue tax has resulted in owners either moving on to the farms themselves or of employing a resident salaried worker. A Chamarajanagar merchant of my acquaintance who did not live on his land but had employed a contract servant as caretaker of it for a number of years was in danger of losing it when I was last there as the caretaker had laid claim to the plot before the Land Tribunal. Absentee landlordism is nowadays recognised in the area to be a risky business and town property is regarded by many of the taluk's more affluent citizens to be a safer investment, though landlord/tenant relations are not very happy there either.

Until the fairly recent past, Chamarajanagar worthies aver, there were local conventions as to customary payments and rewards for services. I use this rather clumsy circumlocution in preference to the word 'system' because it does not seem to have been very systematic and possibly varied from household to household. If there were regularities they certainly do not exist today, although Scarlett Epstein describes a system of customary rewards for the Mandya district of Karnataka (Epstein 1967). Anthony Good describes three types of prestation or reward-giving indigenous to his area of fieldwork in Tamilnadu, in which the first approximates to a straight fee or wage, the second has to do with the socially accepted rights and obligations, and the third is a sort of politesse - slightly more than enough, as in a tip. (Good 1982). He argues that the so-called 'Jajmani system' as first proposed by Wiser (1936) and subsequently dissected by Pocock (1957), Kolenda (1963), and others, is not an all-India syndrome and was probably never even seen as a 'system' by the actors concerned. Concepts approximating to those described by Good also exist in Chamarajanagar, but their interpretation differs from one individual to another.

Each well-to-do family in Chamarajanagar, merchants and professionals as well as cultivators, has its own priest, washerman or woman, sweeper and (if landed), farm labourers, whose relationship with the family has tended to be an hereditary one and who used to be paid at least partly in grain. These transactions in grain are largely moribund today, but Gowdas (landowning peasants) often still pay partly in grain instead of cash. However, the increase in cash crops has brought about a market situation today, with bargaining and disputes over pay and hours. The fact that farmers have diversified so that a variety of crops require harvesting at different times of year has enabled employers and employees to play their opposite number off against each other. Besides this, 'dynamic' caste relations as well as antagonistic 'class' feeling centering on land ownership are showing a marked tendency to disrupt traditional relationships. Having said this it is necessto add that structures of a traditional sort survive for practical reasons. As Epstein puts it:

> "In order to maximise his total product the peasant farmer needed helpers; he needed them even more in good years than in bad. To make certain that his helpers were on the spot when required he in turn was prepared to maintain hereditary relationships with them and to give them fixed annual rewards".
> (Epstein 1967: p.242-3)

Looked at this way such patron/client structures might be regarded as the product of expectations as to the performance of rôles. In retrospect I see how my parents, ostensibly engaged in a 'cash' relationship with their employees, were pressured by the expectations of these people to accept the position of the traditional Indian landowner. Living in a place where no Western or colonial 'system' already operated because there were no foreigners on the hills apart from the family, they found themselves employing the descendants of retired or deceased employees from one generation to the next and involved

in prestatory transactions in which their roles as both donor and recipient of appropriate gifts had become prescriptive. The idiom was that of kinship: "You are my father and my mother" was a phrase frequently used by employees preparatory to claiming support in disputes; requesting loans, clothing, medical help, employment of their relatives; and advice in dealing with officialdom. Relationships were enduring in a large proportion of cases, extending to at least three generations. Payment was in kind as well as cash. Permanent labourers - those who had settled on the estate or with whom there was a hereditary relationship, and service families (washerman, sweeper, carpenter etc.), were given produce such as grain and coffee and also clothing. At the main Hindu festivals, as well as at Christmas, gifts were expected by these employees and the house servants (who also operated on a hereditary basis), as a right. On my parents' side the expectation was of trustworthiness on the part of the employee. These mutual expectations were on the whole fulfilled because they were reciprocatory. In the words of H.C. Kelman:

> "A reciprocal role relationship can be maintained only if the participants have mutually shared expectations of one another's behaviour. Thus, if an individual finds a particular relationship satisfactory, he will tend to....behave in line with the requirements of this particular relationship". (Kelman, 1966: P.154)

The requirements of my family's relationships with their employees were those of paternalism, a role which was in any case congruent with the value system of their time and of the people among whom they lived.

A case which interested me in this context was that of my landlord, an absentee smallholder whose arrangement with his contract servant, the farm caretaker, was by no means paternalistic. The caretaker received no free grain at harvest or any other time with which to augment his fixed wage, although he was allowed to buy it at cost price. But his household had a right to all the vegetables they needed among those he chose to grow on the land, and a

part of the area was always devoted to vegetables in their season, the bulk of which of course went to the landlord's household. He also had a number of other perquisites which helped to enhance his meagre monthly retainer. Both parties to these unwritten agreements seemed fairly satisfied, though both grumbled vociferously about the shortcomings of the other. In contrast to this relatively amicable relationship those of the landlord with the hired day labourers he employed whenever they were needed were highly antagonistic and entailed a good deal of abusive shouting on one side and passive resistance on the other.

In 1976 the Government at last introduced a basic minimum wage, (Five rupees per day in 1979-80), for agricultural labourers. At the time my fieldwork ended in 1980 nobody was taking much notice of this legislation, though employers were well aware of it, and women in particular were still being ruthlessly exploited, being paid (in 1980) Rs.2.50 to Rs.3.00 per day for the same working hours and indeed the same sort of tasks for which the men were being paid Rs.4.00 and more per day. The fact that unemployment in Karnataka is running at about 10% (1977-78), and that farm labourers in the taluk have no union organisation tends to counteract their bargaining power. On the other hand women working in gumpu or teams rather than singly can be tough bargainers, pressing home their collective advantage by failing to turn up on vital harvest days unless their claims are met. Today in the taluk women perform all the dry land tasks that men do with the exception of ploughing. They also do most of the transplanting of rice in the wet lands.

Unlike many other parts of India the south-west monsoon rains (June to September), though valuable, are not vitally important to the agriculture of this part of the State. It is the heavy storms of the north-east monsoon (October to December), and the pre-monsoon storms from March to May which fill the shallow kere and the wells and water the dry lands./

dry lands. The hills themselves attract heavy rainfall on the higher slopes during the north-east monsoon and continuous mist and drizzle during the south-west, and it sometimes happens that near-famine conditions brought about by lack of rain may prevail on the taluk plain while the hills receive an adequate rainfall.

The Billigirirangan range, which runs north-south for about sixty miles, is still mostly clad in evergreen and deciduous forest or long grass, a jungle still supporting a fair amount of wild life, including tiger, panther, bear, bison and elephant, deer and antelope, administered by the Ministry of Forests. There are 63,798 acres of forest land in the Chamarajanagar taluk section of this wilderness alone, and it extends into two other taluks. The only indigenous inhabitants of the hills are members of the Sholiga tribe, the Kad Sholigaveru or Forest People, as they call themselves. But in the past almost the entire labour force employed on the five coffee estates on the hills, which vary in size from 200 to 500 acres, were drawn from villages in the taluk, and though a proportion of the labourers now come from the Kollegal taluk some Chamarajanagar villages still supply estate workers there for generation after generation. The migration may be seasonal or semi-permanent, although even those who have settled in the labour villages on the estates often travel to and from their native villages where many of them still own fields. In the past the journey was made on foot over several days, but there is now a daily bus to Chamarajanagar town, owned by the son of one of the estate overseers, which is linked to the villages by other bus routes. The main ragi harvest occurs in June, when the coffee requires little attention, so much of the labour force return to their home villages in the south-west monsoon.

Estate workers are engaged by maistries (who are co-villagers) and receive advance payments from them. A maistry's gang may consist of some ten to twenty people

of both sexes and more than one caste. He gets a commission of about 20 paisa (1/5th of a rupee) per head per day. He is then responsible for the standard of work and behaviour of his group of recruits and acts as overseer.

Sixty per cent of India's coffee is exported through the Coffee Marketing Board, today mainly to Britain, the U.S.A. and Germany. After the failure of the Brazilian coffee crop in 1976 the price of the high altitude Arabica coffee grown on the hills rose from Rs.8,000 a tonne to Rs.10,000 a tonne. An average crop on Honnametti, the estate formerly owned by my parents, which covers about 500 acres, is about 150 tonnes. But costs have risen proportionately, not only wages and the cost of foodgrains but essential raw materials have soared. For instance, the price of copper sulphate, 10 tons of which are required yearly by Honnametti, the largest estate, for spraying against leaf-disease, which twenty years ago sold at Rs.80.00 a cwt., is now Rs.500.00 a cwt. Furthermore profits are now very highly taxed.

In 1976 the daily wages on the estates were Rs.4.80 for a man and Rs.4.00 for a woman. In 1979 the two sexes received equal pay (Rs.7.00 a day) for the first time. Apart from higher wages, job security, subsidised ragi, gratuities, bonuses, overtime and severance payments, plus - in theory - free schooling and medical treatment, are all perquisites which counteract the pull of the home villages and encourage migration to the estates. Although labour/management relations tend to be potentially explosive in many plantation areas in south India they are still fairly placid, if hardly cordial, on the Billigirirangans. The labour force there is almost unique in the plantation scene in modern India in that there is no union. This may be because the hills constitute an isolated and jungly area boasting of no urban centre or travellers' lodging from which union officials could set about organising the labourers. However the labour force did go on strike in 1980 on

the grounds that the management of the estates were failing in their obligation to provide the services of a doctor. In fact the management had been trying for some time to find a doctor prepared to serve in such an isolated place. They finally found one in Chamarajanagar who agreed to hold two surgeries a week on the hills. He was reluctant to spend the night, confiding to me that there was "nothing to do" there when his working hours were over. One of India's great problems is the attraction of urban bright lights for the newly qualified in most professions.

Apart from the coffee estates, certain other activities unite in symbiosis the worlds of hill-range and rural plain within the taluk. Cattle grazing, often accompanied by the poaching of allegedly 'protected' wild life on the hills, is carried on by villagers living in hamlets in the foothills. Timber contractors extract hardwood under licence from the Forest authorities from those parts of the hills accessible by road; and the Billigirirangan Temple in the Western foothills of the range, perched on the high white cliff from which the hills take their name, (the White Hills of Rangan), has become a popular place of pilgrimage in the district.

The Town Chamarajanagar town, headquarters of the taluk, lies 36 miles south-east of Mysore and is the terminus of a narrow-gauge branch railway from that city. It was known as Arakathera until the year 1818, when the maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1799-1888), whose unfortunate father Chamaraja Wodeyar IX, puppet prisoner-prince under Tipu Sultan, was born there, resolved to dedicate the town to his memory. In 1825 the Maharaja founded there a large temple in honour of the now deified Chamarajasvara. Within the central court he directed three shrines to be built, the centre one dedicated to Chamarajasvara; the one to the right of the entrance gate to Shiva, possibly in deference to the fact that the area is a stronghold of the monotheist Lingayat

sect who worship Shiva and his consort Parvati as aspects of the Supreme Being; and the one to the left to Chamundi, family goddess of the princely lineage.

The town, which has an area of 11 square kilometres, has a population of approximately 31,000, of which about 25,000 are Hindus, including Lingayats and Jains, about 5,000 are Muslims and about 1,000 are Christians of various denominations. (1971 census). Its chief manufactures are raw sugar, ground-nut oil and silk yarn. Its chief exports are raw sugar, silk yarn, timber from the hills, and pulses. As an administrative centre its Government offices include the police HQ for the taluk; the Magistrates' Court; the Municipal office; the Taluk Office, which deals with land and crop records and taxation; the Divisional Office of the Public Works Department; the Taluk Veterinary Surgery; a Primary Health Centre (24-bed hospital), with a staff of one female and four male doctors, six nurses and four midwives; nine public primary schools of different denominations and for different languages; seven middle schools, again catering for Kannada, Tamil and Urdu speakers; and two public secondary schools, one for girls and one for boys. There are no fire or ambulance services. In the private sector the town boasts of six banks; three cinemas showing films in Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, and occasionally English; ten private doctors running their own clinics, all well patronised by anyone who can afford the fairly modest fees; a private primary school run by Catholic nuns; a co-educational fee-paying high school, and a co-educational college, both Lingayat foundations. All education in the college, which offers Mysore University degrees, is in English. These private establishments are favoured by those members of the affluent class who aspire to a modern life-style, although the college is considered to be a less prestigious place of higher education than Mysore University. Parents who decide to educate their daughters to graduate level tend to send their girls to the college, where they can keep an eye on them, and their boys to the University, unless they are very unorthodox, the girls are outstandingly successful at school, the required degree is

higher than those offered by the college, or the family has relatives in Mysore where the girls can board. There is also a secretarial college, mostly patronised by graduates wishing to collect some practical as well as academic qualifications.

Chamarajanagar, known to the cognoscenti as 'Nagar or 'Nagara, is a fairly typical south Indian rural-based market town, and because it possesses neither large focal industries, notable ancient monuments, interesting architecture, or natural scenic charm, very few foreigners have had occasion to visit it in the past, and even fewer do so now. In fact the visit of a foreigner is still an event which draws a crowd and is discussed all over town. There is no hotel in the town, only a travellers' bungalow and a lodging house in a back street. Lying on a main road connecting the manufacturing centres of the Tamilnadu plains with the chief cities of the Karnataka plateau, Mysore and Bangalore, it is well served by diesel buses, the ceaseless blast of whose wind-horns renders day and night hideous in the vicinity of the road. Our town has become articulated with the outside world both econonomically and through the movements of an increasingly mobile population. As a railhead, Chamarajanagar, even under British rule, had been a local centre of commerce and administration. The villager came slowly to town on foot or by bullock cart to sell produce and buy consumer goods, while it took three hours to travel by train the thirty-six miles from Chamarajanagar to Mysore. Today, although it is still a three-hour journey by train to Mysore, many villagers still travel on foot, and laden carts still plod slowly along the crown of the road, frequent and cheap bus services link up the villages with the town and the town with the city.

The cinema comprises another powerful medium for social change in the area. Here, as in the buses and the train, considerations of caste are abandoned. Anyone who has the money for a seat may sit anywhere he or she chooses. For the promulgation of Government policies in a still largely illiterate country the cinema (like the ubiquitous transistor

radio), is a useful and influential medium, showing, for instance, documentaries encouraging family planning or chicken farming, or discouraging tax evasion and black marketeering. For women the cinema provides a new means of recreation, better than radio, since it involves more human contacts. The more emancipated, whether traditionally or through Westernisation, may visit it with female friends and relations, with or without escorting male relations. The more restricted may visit it escorted by husbands, fathers or brothers.

The language medium of many advertisements and Government documentaries is English. In south India, from the early 19th century onward English became increasingly the second language, a great convenience as there was no lingua franca connecting the four 'Dravidian' languages in the way that Hindustani (a mixture of Hindi and Urdu originally used by the Indian Army under British rule) did, and still does, serve as a common tongue in the North. But after Independence the Indian Government tried, and is indeed still trying, to introduce the use of Hindi as a second and official language for the whole country. The first result of this policy in south India was a series of fierce language riots, coupled with the tearing down of Hindi signs and notices in public places. A more long-term reaction has been a great and conscious increase in the use of English in south India, in defiance of what is spoken of in the south as 'Hindi imperialism'. College and University teaching as in most parts of India is in English, which requires intensive teaching of the language at secondary-school level. In Mysore District an enormous number of English nouns and verbs, supplied with the relevant Kannada suffix, have been absorbed into the language. For instance in Chamrajanagar town the word breadu is far more commonly used for bread than the indigenous word roti. English phrases intersperse the conversation of the more educated. Watching a game of tennis, I was intrigued to hear, when the ball went out of court, interrogative cries of "outa ?"

receive affirmative replies of "outu". Even peasants, labourers and the tribesmen of the hills have a few words and phrases of the language. My father noticing that the Sholiga tribe spoke of the land on each side of the Karnataka-Tamilnadu border as "Mysuru" and "Kuppani", was puzzled by the etymology of "Kuppani". Eventually he traced it to the English word 'Company'. Tamilnadu, as opposed to Mysore, was of course once East India Company territory. The English which provides such a convenient lingua franca is not, for the semi-educated majority of those who make use of it, the English of the Westernised but a kind of 'pidgin', a mixture of formal (non-colloquial) phraseology, direct translation from the Kannada and basic usage. One does not, for instance, ask if a person is about to set off on foot, the phrase is to "go by walk".

The cinema has merely augmented and not replaced traditonal forms of recreation. Story-tellers, musicians, drama, dance and song groups, both live and in the form of puppet shows, still recount and interpret local variations of stories from the epics and the puranas. Travelling circuses, jugglers and 'magicians' still visit towns and villages. Each village has its own experts in drama and dance, and, as we shall see below, one local jati makes a secondary speciality of the more energetic folk forms, such as sword and stick dances. In the town children and young people engage in amateur dramatics, encouraged in the schools. Middle class people visit each other's houses to sing bhajanas, devotional songs, to listen to the girls playing the sitar or vina, or to watch them perform in the traditional bharatnatya dance. Young people among the Westernised élite visit each other's houses to play 'pop' records. Young men of other classes meet to gamble with cards, dice or fighting quail, sometimes with disastrous consequences. Men from some communities congregate in the Government liquor shops, though drunkenness is not a serious problem, except among the Hellava community of itinerant Beggar-Bards, who concoct their own brews. Football and cricket are enjoyed even by the poorest and least sophisticated of town schoolboys, while in the villages indigenous

games with sticks and stones on the lines of marbles, hop-scotch or jacks are more usually played. Handball and badminton are popular among middle-class youths. There was a tennis club with one court for the élite of the town, but a split has occurred within this group which has resulted in the forming of a separate club by one of the factions. The cause of this split was the increasing tension between the local business community and the officials, who are regarded by the locals with a modicum of suspicion, reserved by most Indians for Government servants, (the while they try to get themselves and their offspring into Government service), and who also tend to be newcomers to the town. The officials wished the court to be reserved for themselves alone at certain times of day on the grounds that they had less freedom to choose at which time to play.

It is noteworthy that the cinema has had a considerable effect in modernising entertainment. The plays acted by travelling theatre companies or amateur dramatic groups today sometimes have a modern social content rather than a mythological one, and these plays often derive from film stories. Coffee-shops and eating-houses and stalls have installed radios which blare film music at all hours of the day and night. Night watchmen guarding crops in the fields do so in the company of their transistors at full blast, which appears to disturb nobody but the unfortunate foreign participant observer, from whose 'etic' point of view this innovation does little to promote nocturnal ease. Even the Beggar-Bards have abandoned their traditional folk songs for songs from films and pool their resources to send their young men to the cinema to learn words and music.

In the countryside the yearly jatre or fair, along with the weekly shanti or market held in some of the larger villages, combine the properties of recreation and business (and, in the case of the jatre, of religious observance). In Chamarajanagar town the fortnight-long feast

of Ganesh Gauri, the elephant-headed son of Shiva, is celebrated as a festival of drama, music, and dance in which local talent, both male and female, plays a major part. The Chamarajasvara devastana (temple) still provides a focal point, as the Church did traditionally in the West, for participation in recreation as well as in religious observance for the whole society. The growing tide of secularism engulfing India today has brought about a shift in emphasis in the religious life of Chamarajanagar towards a tendency to settle for communal tolerance. On the night of Mahashivaratri members of all communities go in family groups, dressed in their best, to mingle in the courtyard of the devastana as they lay their tributes of fruit and flowers at the various shrines devoted to aspects of Shiva. At the time of the annual devastana jatre people of all communities come in from the villages and are paid a measure of grain to haul on the ropes of the heavy wooden temple chariot on its circumnavigation of the edifice. In the same way, though communal riots do still occasionally take place as the result of deliberate provocation (such as taking a Hindu procession past the mosque in the Muslim quarter), the local Hindus tend to view the local Muslims as yet another jati in the cultural and 'ethnic' sense, albeit one which has gained itself a territory, Pakistan, from which it projects a vague political menace. As for the Christians, once regarded with contempt as a heterogenous group recruited from members of untouchable jati trying to improve their status by adopting the religion of the British rulers, they too are now regarded as a rule with tolerance, even respect, as yet another culture-group. The Anglo-Indians, who of course are all Christians, mostly Roman Catholics, have also succeeded in establishing themselves as a most respectable category within the wider society, and Christmas Day is an official public holiday enjoyed by most groups in the town.

The devastana jatre itself is an interesting piece of syncretism. It takes place in the month of

Sravanna (July-August), in honour of the god Shiva, and compares in these and many other details with the Lingyat fairs described by William McCormack in his appendix to Ramanujan's 'Speaking of Shiva' (1973), but the officiating priests are Madhwa Brahmans and the leaders of the procession are Banajigas, who are followers of Vishnu rather than of Shiva. The images of Shiva and his consort Parvati, moreover, are first presented at the shrine of Chamundi, an aspect of the mother-goddess, familiarly styled Amma (madam, lady or mother) or by the honorific plural Ammaniaveru, the universal object of village worship in south India as the uru devi or village goddess. (Although she has many sisters, of whom Chamundi is one, the most frequent manifestation of Amma is that of Mariamma, uru devi of Somavarapet, the large village on the fringe of which I lived, off and on, for some years). Chamundi is also an aspect of Durga, one of the three chief deities of the Hindu pantheon today, and is said in Mysore to have performed the same exploits, such as slaying the buffalo-demon. In a sense, therefore, this festival represents the 'total religious field', as postulated by S.J. Tambiah (Tambiah 1971).

One important facet of Chamrajanagar society which is difficult to classify, since its various elements may come under the heading of recreation, business, social welfare, religion or even crime, is the unofficial specialist. These may belong to any community and either sex. They may specialise in healing physical illness through the use of folk medicines or the repeating of mantras (words of power). They may cast out spirits, or they may, as sorcerers (mata), be involved in black magic, invoking demons (bhuta or dya), or ghosts (preta). They may specialise in one particular treatment, often highly effective, such as the cure of scorpion stings or, as in the case of the Kanniyar community, earn their living by travelling as itinerant quacks with a mixture of traditional and modern powders, pills and liquids for hypodermic injection.

They may also specialise in spirit possession and/or divination, hold séances and give advice to a clientele drawn from all communities. They may practise in their spare time or sporadically, or they may be full-time practitioners. Witchcraft in particular may be practised either as a 'one-off' affair by amateurs or regularly by a specialist, and is widely believed in by Chamrajanagar denizens of all social levels.

On the whole the town has not been much affected, physically, by modernisation. The cinema, hospital, banks, some of the larger and newer shops, and the houses and places of work of the officials and the richer citizens are supplied with electricity, but out of 5,316 households in the town only some 964 have electricity laid on. (1971 census figures). The tubewells on the surround-tote (farms) belonging to the more substantial cultivators have electric pumps. But most houses, shops and food-stalls are still lit by kerosene lanterns or pressure lamps. The outlying villages have no electricity. The town's water supply, which comes from the Honnuhole river, is only laid on to the most modern houses, though it supplies stand-pipes in the town and nearby villages. In the past the men of Somavarpet village had great difficulty in finding wives, as the nearest source of water was the kere a mile away and parents did not care to subject their daughters to a lifetime of hard labour in the way of water-transportation. Now there are several stand-pipes in the village and brides are more easily obtainable. Very few buildings in the taluk have running water laid on and I do not know of any that have running hot water, with the possible exception of a rich and enterprising doctor who keeps cows to supply a cow-dung-gas plant for his suburban house.

Only the richer houses and larger institutions have any kind of water-closet plumbing (183 households out of the 5,316 which make up the town),and sewage disposal in their case is by cesspit or septic tank. For the rest, open sewers line the streets throughout the town and are crossed by

stone slabs to reach shops, offices and dwellings. Food shops hang over these drains, while myriads of flies divide their attention between the uncovered wares and the drains, vying with the cockroaches for a share of the goods. The general public relieves itself directly into these sewers or in the back alleys of the town, except for those who live near enough to the outskirts to use the margins of the main road and neighbouring fields. The streets are unpaved and pot-holed, the shops are open-fronted, many of them wooden stalls, and pedestrians, bicycles, bullock carts, buses, lorries, cows, goats, starving dogs with ghastly skin diseases, and the occasional car jostle for priority and right of way, keeping firmly to the crown of the road. Vehicles avoid the roadside in town and country because the deep dust causes skidding and conceals the razor-edged cast bullock shoes which cause so many punctures. Pedestrians do so to avoid trudging through human ordure. As dusk falls the legions of flies give way to those of mosquitoes, while rats, cockroaches and scorpions come out to go about their business. But in the midst of these uninviting features the most striking characteristic of the place is the liveliness, jocundity and generosity of the majority of its inhabitants, and the personal cleanliness achieved in the face of so many impediments. Nor is 'Nagar ever dull; on the contrary it overflows with life, variety and colour.

Employment, Housing and Family Structure, Education

The first question that arises in this section may be expressed simply enough: who does what ? But it cannot be answered without a preliminary excursion into the subject of caste as represented by the local *jati*, more circumstantially to be dealt with in the next chapter. If we take the 'emic' view of *jati* as a category with both ethnic and occupational connotations it is possible to associate certain groups with specific activities, but only on the understanding that there are countless exceptions to the rule, where a 'rule' exists. By this I do not merely mean that, for instance, not all members of the Oil-Presser *jati* are oil-pressers by trade,

but that a great many people are engaged in traditionally 'casteless' employment such as agriculture, or in new, i.e. modern, trades and professions which are also caste-free.

To begin with agriculture, the occupation which employs and supports 44% of the population of the taluk, those involved fall into two divisions, cultivators or landholders, and landless labourers. The two overlap somewhat, as very small landholders will usually augment their income by labour on the land of others. There are in all 38,558 landowning cultivators in the taluk, of which about 4% are women. (1971 census figures). The great majority of these are Lingayat Gowdas. There are three jati of Gowdas (Cultivators or Peasant Farmers). in Karnataka: Okkaliga, Kuruba and Lingayat. In many parts of the State Okkaligas, the Peasants in Scarlett Epstein's monographs on the economy of villages in the Mandya District, (Epstein 1962,1967,1973), fill the Gowda niche. They are the second largest caste in Karnataka after the Lingayats. In Chamarajanagar taluk their place is taken by the Lingayats. Lingayat Gowdas are one of the two lay subcastes of the Lingayat jati (as opposed to the Lingayat priest and monk subcastes). The other lay subcaste is that of the Lingayat Shettis or merchants. Today many Lingayat Shettis also own land, though generally near the town where they can combine agriculture with trade. Many other jati also own land. Kuruba Gowdas, a generally poor but respected community, usually have small plots and often combine agriculture with goat-herding. Round the town a number of Jettis, migrant members of a caste native to Andhra Pradesh who settled in Mysore in the past, have large holdings, Another group of migrants, Naidus from Tamilnadu, have also settled in the taluk as highly successful cultivators, much admired for their diligence and technical skill. Naikars are another local group largely associated with cultivation. Kumbar Shettis and Ganigar Shettis, the Potter and Oil-Presser castes, also farm around the large villages near the town. A few members of the local Brahman sub-castes own land which members of other castes work for them since they are prohibited from doing so for fear

of taking life. This restriction is even more forceful for the Jain community, and I do not know of any Jain landowners in the area. Among the lower and poorer castes, Upuligas and Harijans predominate among the smallholders. Further afield in the hinterland of the taluk most of the land is cultivated by the four groups of Lingayat Gowdas (the majority), Naikars, Harijans and Upuligas, although near the borders of Yelandur and Kollegal taluks Okkaligas are once more in evidence. Besides all these, of course, other categories of people may farm. There are a few very rich Muslim landowners. There are a few Christians. Members of any group, with the possible exception of Jains, may own and cultivate, or get others to cultivate, the land.

But 38% of the 62,222 persons engaged, in one way or another, in agriculture do not own land, or if they do, own so little that they have to augment their earnings by labouring for others. The fact that they do manual work restricts the categories which are thus employed. Although agricultural work is theoretically caste-free, Brahmans (and of course Jains) will not undertake the work because of the possibility of taking life, and members of other high castes who are able to choose will not do so either because they hope to emulate the Brahmans or because manual work in India is regarded as socially degrading, a concept which is divorced from the ideology of ritual purity and pollution and might therefore be regarded as part of a 'class' rather than a caste ideology. I once called on a high-caste smallholder acquaintance whose <u>tote</u> adjoined 'my' village of Somavarapet to find him in a state of agitation. He had arranged for a <u>gumpu</u> of women to come that morning to remove the flowers from his onion crop and they had not turned up, no doubt because of a subsequent, more profitable engagement. His anxiety about the possibility of getting a very reduced crop if the flowers were not speedily eliminated was such that I offered to help, pointing out that he and I could easily complete the job that morning if we set to forthwith. "But I can't do that" he said, horrified, "It would be beneath my dignity". In that case, I told him, I would carry on alone

to help him out. "No," he replied, "Whatever you may do in your own country, it would affect my reputation if I were seen to allow you to do such work here". The people who are agricultural labourers, then, are those who have to labour because they are poor to begin with, although they may be of quite high caste, (such as poor Lingayats), but whose local jati culture does not forbid them to work on ritual grounds. They also include those whose occupation is traditionally associated with agriculture or other kinds of manual work. In our taluk these include Kurubas, Naikars, Upuligas, among the 'clean' low castes and the 'untouchable' Harijans. That the majority of agricultural labourers are Harijans (as well as a considerable proportion of owner-cultivators), is not surprising, since working on the land is the traditional occupation of the caste. The next largest group of agricultural labourers are the Upuligas, followed by the Naikars. Compared with the percentage of female landowners that of female agricultural labourers is high: 41% (1971 census) the majority of them coming from the Harijan and Upuliga communities, where it is customary for the females to work along with the males.

Nearly 4,000 people in the taluk are employed by the Forest Department or herd livestock. Twenty-two per cent of these are women, who tend to specialise in rearing goats. Selling milk is regarded as suitable work for women and many widows take up this 'dairy' work. Women also constitute 23% of the 1138 construction workers. Most of those involved in this industry are Upuligas, one of whose hereditary occupations this is. As Upuliga women are renowned for working sturdily beside their menfolk the number of women engaged in this activity would probably be greater if those in the Upuliga quarter of the town had not achieved a virtual monopoly of the jobs in the silk factory, which operates nearby.

Although cottage industry used to be a stronghold of female participation in the labour force, only 29% of the 3,000-odd people now involved in such industries in the

taluk are female. This may be because silkworm rearing, the principal cottage industry in the taluk, can be done in any household that can put up with its inconvenience, and the work done by the women can be rendered 'invisible' if census-takers merely note that the head of the silkworm-rearing household is male. Many cultivator households rear silkworms as well, and these are then the responsibility of the women, though there are cases of Harijan and Upuliga women working their own lands while their husbands rear the silkworms. The same qualification attaches to the enumeration of women in cultivation. The 4% given by the census figures obviously covers only those households where the land is in the woman's name alone, whereas the wives of the majority of Harijan and Upuliga landowners can and do work on the land with their husbands and children. The wives of most Kurubas, Naikars and Lingayat Gowdas are also quite capable of running the family tote along with their spouses, in their absence, or as widows, (although the women of these communities, unless they are very poor, will only supervise the work of others. But then the same applies to a lesser extent to their husbands). In any case the participation of these women as cultivators is also likely to be invisible to the census taker.

About 2,500 people, 17% of whom are women, work in other industries; the silk and sugar factories, family rice husking and silk-spinning works, tailoring, baking, sweet-making, potting. In this group are included the artisans: the carpenters, blacksmiths and goldsmiths. The wives of all the workers in this group, with the exception of the artisans, help in the family workshops unless the family is affluent. Most middle to high castes work in these trades, although low castes too may run spinning, husking or crushing mills.

Another 3,000 or so are engaged in trade and commerce, a rubric which covers a wide variety of

occupations from flower stalls and the vegetable sellers in the bazaar, or the little tea and coffee stalls known as 'hotelu', to the profitable general stores, drapers, chemist shops, ironmongers, bedding makers and indeed banks. Only 10% of the recorded workers in these fields are women, and again the wives of the better-off are likely to be restricted to the domestic sphere, and in the case of the high caste, with the exception of those few who are relatively Westernised, will have no choice in the matter. The local communities who are usually to be found in commerce, those whose traditional occupation comes under this heading, are the Lingayat Shettis (Shetti= merchant), the Banajigas, and the Vaisya community, who actually take their jati name from that of the merchant varna or category of the four divisions of ancient Hindu society laid down by scriptural authority. Others engaged in this type of employment are Brahmans, Ursu (the royal jati), Jettis, and members of high or medium caste jati who have migrated temporarily or permanently from other parts of Karnataka or from the three other southern States.

Transport and communications employs about 1,000 people in the taluk, from the rich Okkaliga (medium caste, non vegetarian,non-Brahmanised), who owns a fleet of lorries to the lorry drivers themselves, the bus drivers, garage owners and garage mechanics, and the owners and drivers of hire-cars and 'autos',(scooter rickshaws). People in these non-traditional occupations can be, and are, of any community, and the order of affluence of those who work in them does not in the least accord with traditional 'status summation'. There are Brahman bus drivers and mechanics and the Harijan owner of a private bus and of a hire car. Low caste owners may employ, if rich enough, high caste underlings. Hardly any women are employed in these sectors with the exception of the very low caste sweepers.

Lastly, we have other services, which can include anything from the well-off members of the professions,

doctors, lawyers, bankers, engineers employed by the Government, top Public Works Department and police officials, all the types represented in the town Rotary Club, to the washermen and women and the sweepers. Some 5,200 people are covered by this census classification, 23% of them being women. A very few of these women are drawn from the top echelons, chiefly doctors, health and social workers, and teachers; the rest serving in lowly and despised jobs at the bottom, mostly concerned with heavy cleansing. The orthodox high caste view is that women should not engage in any activity that brings them into contact with strange men. In buses and trains non-Westernised high caste women, even though accompanied by male relatives, always seat themselves next to other women, even if empty seats affording more space are available. Basically, high caste women, unless comparatively Westernised, do not work outside the household unless forced to do so by poverty. Nevertheless female work force participation is comparatively high in the taluk: 18% compared to 14% for all Karnataka and 12% for all India. (1971 census).

We turn now to another fundamental question: who lives where ? The structure of households in the taluk depends mainly on two variables, the relative affluence of the household and its cultural disposition. The following graded list covers most types of dwelling to be found in the taluk, with inevitable overlaps.

1. The traditional large dwelling of well-off merchants, often built round a courtyard, usually found in the town.
2. The concrete, Western-type house or villa with modern conveniences, usually with a garden, in the town suburbs.
3. Transitional between 1 and 2.
4. The traditional large tiled village house of more affluent villagers.
5. Small modern house or flat, generally in the town.
6. As 4 above but without piped water or indoor sanitation, generally found in the countryside.

7. Small house built of local materials, chenam (mud and plaster) walls, tiled or thatched roof, cow-dung floor.
8. Rural or urban traditional street dwelling, usually one or two rooms and a verandah.
9. Rural or urban basti or slum shanty
10. Sholiga woven forest hut.

The type of dwelling in which a family lives is quite a good index of its economic status as well as its composition, but can be misleading because of the intervention of cultural proclivities. For instance a family living in one of the new modern villas which are beginning to proliferate along the roads leading out of Chamarajanagar town, houses with gardens, Western-type sanitation and relatively modern kitchens, must be well off, but may not compare in wealth to a family living in one of the old traditional houses in the town centre, dark, dirty and dilapidated though the house may be. The villa households are often nuclear, though they may also house an extended family of a couple, their children and the husband's parents. The traditional houses are built as joint family dwellings and usually house a joint family. People in the modern houses are generally quite house-proud and prone to spending money on decoration and comfortable furniture. Those in the traditional houses do not trouble themselves about dust, cobwebs and the state of the paintwork, though the floors where people sit are regularly swept. Invited into the kitchen of one such house (a privileged visit to be undertaken barefoot and newly washed), I rather tactlessly remarked that a crumbling window-sill could do with a lick of plaster and paint. My interlocutor shrugged and replied dismissively, "Oh, we don't live like that". The corporate property of this family was considerable and brought them in a comfortable income. They ate well and educated their children at the town's private schools. The only pictures in such houses, apart from the odd example of traditional calendar art, depicting various deities, are photographs of family members hung well above eye level on the wall, those of the deceased decorated with garlands. Apart from a few cane and metal

chairs in the front room for visitors and a radio little attention is paid to the comforts of modernity. Most of them have dark rooms opening on to a central courtyard in which is situated the household well and where the washing hangs. Married couples have a bedroom each and unmarried brothers and sisters, along with the children of the married couples, lay out their bedrolls at night to sleep communally on the floor in the central hallway or family meeting room. In another such household of my acquaintance where there were seldom less than twenty-four members of the joint family present at any one time, there was only one bathroom, dirty and primitive, located in the cowshed. (Although the house was in the centre of the town cows and buffaloes catering for the family milk requirements were stabled there at night). This house had a particularly large courtyard, partially roofed and cool, which constituted the hub of the family activities and the social life of the women.

This family owned a couple of landholdings and were quite well off as a corporate group, having inherited useful town property from the deceased father, but they could not compare in wealth with a distant relative of the deceased father who, besides other valuable sources of income, had a large and profitable farm on which he lived. His house on this land was a typical traditional big rural house, with a tiled roof dipping to a hole in the centre, whence rain ran in the monsoon into a square plastered pit or tank in the middle of the inner hall off which all the rooms opened. Originally an attractive building with a fine old carved door, it was in an advanced state of decrepitude when I last saw it. I once attended a midday meal there, to find a swarm of hornets nesting in a corner of the sitting room ceiling. Noticing that my co-guest (his cousin) and I kept glancing nervously in the direction of this alarming feature, whence great yellow living missiles zoomed past over our heads, our host remarked cheerfully, "Live and let live. They don't bother me".

Visualise in comparison the modern suburban house of a wealthy and fairly Westernised private physician of

of the town with its shining paintwork, its pretty front garden, its sofa and armchairs, its display shelves of holiday souvenirs and its hi-fi equipment, pride and joy of the couple's only child, a sixteen-year-old girl, fluent in English and in the process of preparation for higher education, and the division between the 'old élite' and the 'new élite' is manifest. J.S. and N.G. Duncan in their Residential Landscapes and Social Worlds (in Sopher ed. 1980), describe exactly the same situation as that to be observed in Chamarajanagar as existing in Hyderabad. Of the 'new élite' they say,"Their tastes and lifestyles are what they describe as 'modern', a term that is commonly used in India to describe Westernised ways". (p.293). Here too the 'new élite' have moved out of the old city and they spend money on the appearance of their houses, in contrast to the equally wealthy 'old élite' who prefer to restrict their conspicuous consumption to their wives' saris and jewellry and to huge wedding feasts.

The big traditional houses in large villages containing members of high caste communities who are affluent as well - e.g. Lingayat Gowdas - are also designed for joint family accommodation, but the other types of dwelling graded above are not, though they may well house extended families. I should like to apologise here for not using the accepted typology of family structure proposed by Pauline Kolenda in her Region, Caste and Family Structure (in Singer and Cohn, [eds], 1968). My own seems to fit the Chamarajanagar circumstances better. A nuclear family, in my terms, consists of one couple with their children. (A sub-nuclear family is one childless couple). A joint family consists of two or more married brothers with property in common, with their wives and children and generally with their parents. If their father is alive he will be the household head, and sometimes the widowed mother, if a powerful enough character, may take his place in that position after his death. A joint family may also include unmarried brothers and sisters. An extended family consists of a married couple, their children, if any, and the husband's

parents. A nuclear family with accretion is one in which another relative, usually an unmarried sister or brother of the husband (or occasionally of the wife, as brides sometimes bring a younger brother with them for company when they go to their husband's place on marriage), is living in the house. The same applies to an extended family with accretion. Accretions may also take the form of a widowed sister or other homeless relative. An interesting point about the wives bringing a younger brother to their virilocal place of future residence is that if the brother stays long enough and makes himself useful enough he may end up marrying his elder sister's elder daughter. On the other hand the very fact that he and the girl have played together from her babyhood may result in a conditioned aversion. A young Lingayat confided in me once to the effect that his family wanted him to marry his elder sister's daughter and that he intended to refuse as he had known the girl all his life and it would be just like having to marry his own sister.

On the whole, for reasons of space alone, nuclear families are in the majority. According to the 1971 census figures, nearly 49% of the population of Karnataka live in one-room houses, the average household consisting of five members. About 31% live in two-room houses, while 11% live in houses with three or more rooms. I did not undertake a room count in the course of my fieldwork, but a door-to-door survey in Somavarapet , the large mixed-caste village where I lived, produced the following results: Of a total of 56 households, 26 - almost half- consisted of a nuclear family. Fourteen households consisted of a joint family in my usage of the term. Seven households consisted of a three-generation extended family. Four households were sub-nuclear. There were four a-typical households. One consisted of two married brothers and their wives, but no parents or children (a fairly rare situation). Two consisted of a widowed mother and her unmarried children,

and one consisted of a childless couple and two widowed sisters of the husband's deceased father.

In his The Household Dimension of the Family in India (Shah 1973) A.M. Shah suggests that the principle of the residential unity of patrikin in India is much stronger among the higher, more Brahman-orientated castes, (who also tend to be wealthier) than among the lower castes, who tend to be poorer. This certainly true of Chamarajanagar, except where 'class' culture in the form of Westernisation at the top provides exceptions to the rule. Shah also says that small traditional towns in India (as opposed to the cities where pressure of space and the influence of modernisation lead to nucleation of families), contain more members of orthodox high castes, who are normally merchants, clerks or small business men, than do the rural villages, in which the lower castes, mainly agricultural workers, predominate. For this reason, there are more joint or extended families living in the small towns and far more nuclear families in the villages. The figures for family type in the six caste-groups in my sample, which are given in Table 18, Section Two, Chapter V, tend to substantiate Shah's theory. For the purposes of this chapter they are expressed as follows:

Caste-group I, Rich Lingayats: 24 nuclear families, 6 nuclear with accretion, 10 joint families and 10 extended with accretion.

Caste-group II, Poor Lingayats: 30 nuclear families, 1 nuclear with accretion, 7 joint families and 12 extended families.

Caste-group III, Other High Castes: 29 nuclear families, 6 nuclear with accretion, 9 joint families and 6 extended families.

Caste-group IV, Town and Around Low Castes: 28 nuclear families, 6 nuclear with accretion, 3 joint families and 13 extended families.

Caste-group V, Hinterland Low Castes: 35 nuclear families, 1 nuclear with accretion, 9 extended families and 3 extended with accretion.

Caste-group VI, Sholiga tribe: 30 nuclear families, 5 nuclear with accretion, 1 joint family and 14 extended families.

The noticeable difference between the caste-groups is not so much the number of nuclear families, although when Rich Lingayats of Group I are compared with Poor Low Castes of Group V, the difference is quite striking, but in the number of joint families. The higher caste-groups, I, II and III, including the Poor Lingayats, all had far more joint families. This is partly because the majority of Caste-group III live in the town, but it also confirms Shah's dictum, that the residential unity of patrikin tends to be a high caste norm. Most of all, I suggest, it is because more people in Groups I and III, and even in II, could afford bigger houses with more rooms. The fact that the Sholigas had more extended families than the other two impoverished and lower caste groups, and even one joint family of modest proportions, is, I believe, due to the space available to them in their forest settlements, throughout which the huts are widely dispersed. Not only is there plenty of space to build a second woven hut for additions to the household, but vertical space is sometimes utilised by expanding the watchman's shelters they build in trees into sleeping quarters. Furthermore the Sholigas tend to cook and to sleep outside except during heavy rains, using their huts mainly for storage, but if a household is defined as 'those sharing a common hearth' the problem of classification is simplified in their case.

Although the Hinterland Low Castes appear to have more nuclear families than any other group, I suspect that this is a function of sharing accommodation. The further away from the town the more one-caste villages there seem to be. The Harijans and Upuligas in the town or the big 'satellite' villages surrounding it tend to live in crowded 'quarters' or one-caste streets in which the dwellings consist of one or two-room houses. Further away, in their one-caste villages, many of the traditional village houses are quite spacious, and these tend to be occupied by more than one household, each with its own cooking hearth, rather than by a single joint family. In one case what might have

been an accretion in different circumstances had perforce to become a household. Two old childless widowed sisters had lived together, working on their inherited fields, in their own mud and plaster house until it collapsed after heavy rain. They were reluctantly taken in by distant relatives, their only surviving kin, who firmly gave them a separate room with its own cooking place and its own entrance from the street. The two old ladies felt that this constituted inhospitality and lack of kin solidarity, but as one of them was an inveterate cadger and bossy with it, no doubt the kin had their reasons. It should be remembered that the number and composition of a family or household depends on the stage of the domestic group's developmental cycle. A nuclear family may become extended in the course of time and subsequently revert to nuclear as its component personnel grow up, move out and/or die. In the same way fission in a joint family may fragment the group into a number of nuclear units.

According to the 1971 census there were over 118,000 people in the State of Karnataka with no houses at all. While a proportion of these could be poverty-stricken pavement dwellers migrating from villages to the big cities, (I neither saw nor heard of any homeless people in Chamarajanagar town), a large number of them are probably members of itinerant tribes who carry their own shelters with them. Among these are the Brinjaris or Shukkaligas, true Gipsies, though attempts, some of them successful, have been made to settle them in new villages. There are also the Hakkipikkiaveru (literally 'birds-and-that-sort-of-thing-people'), who wander in bands about the countryside netting birds and small animals for a living; they could be described as a Poacher Caste. There are also the male Hellevas, the Beggar Bards, who wander from village to village while their wives keep the home fires burning by cutting and selling grass and gathering sappu, wild salad greens, to hawk in the streets.

According to the figures given in the 1971 census handbook for the Mysore District, only 42,796 people, or about 19% of the population of the taluk are literate i.e. about 25.6% of the males and 11.6% of the females. This does not compare very well with the figures (1971 census) for Karnataka as a whole or indeed with the all-India figures:

	Total	Males	Females
Chamarajanagar	19%	25.6%	11.6%
Karnataka	31.5%	41.6%	20.9%
All-India	29.2%	39.0%	18.7%

It must be remembered that Chamarajanagar taluk is still a fairly traditional and out-of-the-way backwater. The figures for the town itself look better: 40.6% of the population are literate, of whom 61% are male and 39% female. Considering the number of schools in the vicinity, however, it still fails to impress, and is in fact surprising in view of the respect with which education is held in the taluk. One suspects that children are entered into primary school for a year or so, and then taken away when the household cannot spare their labour. This is especially true of girls, judging from the number of female respondents who said they had been to primary school for a time but were taken away, still illiterate, because their parents needed them - usually to look after younger children when the mother went back to work. Other respondents claimed that they had left school after a year or two because they did not like it: "The teacher beat me", or "The children were rough", and their parents had acceded to their wish to withdraw. Education is not, of course, compulsory in India. To many it remains an unattainable good because of the whole syndrome of incidental expenses to be met even when the State schools are free. My illiterate low-caste neighbour, a very intelligent man who spoke Tamil and Urdu as well as his native Kannada, had high hopes of his son, a bright boy who gained a scholarship to secondary

school. The parents worked hard and long to keep the boy in books and clothing. But his peer-group at secondary school consisted of lads who came from families with more cash to spare than his own parents were able to give him. To find the wherewithal to join them at the cinema and at coffee houses he began to steal and to demand money with menaces from his mother. He was soon in trouble with the police,and his father, a formidably upright man. removed him from school forthwith and put him to work. The disappointment to the parents was so great that no attempt was made to educate any of the other four children in the family.

Sex and Dependency Ratios, Age Distribution. The sex ratio in Chamarajanagar taluk for 1971 was 104 males per 100 females. The 1981 figures for Karnataka and all-India are respectively 104 and 107. (cf. Dyson and Moore, 1983). The 1981 Karnataka ratio compares well with the rest of India, although the three other south Indian States, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and, of course, Kerala, are better still. In contrast with Uttar Pradesh (113), Punjab (113) and Haryana (114), Karnataka appears to confirm the North/South hypothesis of Dyson and Moore. But the figures for 1901 also confirm the view of these authors that creeping 'masculinist' ideals stemming from the North are affecting south Indian ideology concerning female status. In 1901 the Karnataka (or Mysore) figure was 102, while in Tamilnadu and Kerala there was a preponderance of females. But it looks as if influences are working both ways, as in 1901 the sex ratio in the Punjab, for instance, was 120 males to 100 females.

Unfortunately further figures from either the 1981 or the 1971 census for Chamarajanagar are not yet available. We have, however, dependency ratio and age distribution figures for Mysore District of Karnataka, which includes

Chamarajanagar among its eleven taluks. The Dependency ratio for the District is 94, as compared to the all-India ratio of 92. Life expectation in the district is approximately the same as for all-India: (1971): Males 53.2, Females 51.9. The age distribution, which also parallels that for all-India, is as follows:

0-14	42%
15-59	45%
60+	6%

To wind up this chapter a few exegetic observations are called for. At first sight the taluk countryside compares very favourably with the squalor of the town, especially after a year of good rainfall, when it presents an appearance of pastoral charm. But the lot of the poor villager is probably not much better than that of the poor town dweller. The rural slums are often as bad as the urban, because the women may have further to go for water where there are no standpipes, and medical and welfare services are so often locally unavailable. Nor are conditions very much better in the labour villages on the estates, though the hill range affords a prospect of outstanding natural beauty. Cold and overcrowding there tend to counteract the economic benefits, and conveniently placed standpipes are no guarantee of unpolluted water these days. However, this is not to say that conditions everywhere are worse than they were twenty-five years ago. Successive Harijan ministers in the State Government have made much land available to the low castes, besides better chances of education, which are taken up when poor families have already achieved a modicum of upward mobility. A case in point is that of an elderly overseer on Honnametti Estate. Although he and his wife began as illiterate landless labourers, achievement of a higher work status enabled him to give his sons a technical education. They in turn sought wives with some education, and in the third generation he has not only college-educated grandsons but a graduate grand-daughter.

In the political field too the more sophisticated members of the low castes are beginning to feel their strength. They demand land and other perquisites in return for their votes and as landowners are assiduous in insisting on their rights. Although all this has aroused some hostility among the higher-caste communities in the taluk it has not so far led to the acts of violent reprisal which are regrettably not uncommon today in some States - perhaps because there has not yet been sufficient provocation. Furthermore the low caste poor are well aware today that once they can afford to manipulate Government protective legislation to their advantage to achieve the coveted Government jobs which carry power and prestige, the stigma of pollution disappears in the eyes of the higher jati. High caste citizens of Chamarajanagar claim that they will interdine with low caste individuals "if they are cultured", meaning educated, 'modern', and of course influential.

Above all, the lives of the poor are no longer so constantly haunted by bereavement. In the past two or three decades, which have seen control over the great epidemic diseases, as well as increasing availability of antibiotic drugs, the death rate has fallen dramatically, especially the early-age mortality rates. According to the Bangalore Population Centre the survivorship ratios of number of children living to number born have increased remarkably over the past quarter century. (cf. Srinivasan, Reddy and Raju, 1977). This is confirmed by my own observation. As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, genealogies taken from older labourers in the taluk villages revealed that the majority of them lost most of their siblings in childhood. Today more children are surviving to grow up and produce their own offspring.

Tragically, this is a mixed blessing. While the richer and better-educated in the taluk have recognised that these changes make it safer for them to restrict the

number of children they bring into the world and also that the ones they have are going to cost them money if they are to be brought up to compete in modern India, the poor and ignorant now find themselves with larger families than they can afford. As an old villager put it to a voluntary social worker of my acquaintance: "In the past we had cholera, smallpox and plague always with us and half the children died. You people have put a stop to that, so there are more children. Now you say we have too many. What did you expect ? Are you never satisfied ? "

It is with this conundrum that the present study is expressly concerned.

CHAPTER II. Caste

The spectacle of Chamarajanagar citizens en fête at the devastana festival conveys a strong sense not only of communitas but also of homogeneity. Here are the inhabitants of a linguistic region, subject to the same national and State laws and to the tyrannies of the same climatic and other environmental hazards, brought up in the same general traditions, technological methods and local lore, living according to the same calendrical cycle, both agricultural and ritual, using the same idioms, propitiating the same local deities and possessing in common a number of collective representations.

That this impression of homogeneity is an illusion and that the social body of the taluk population, more closely perceived, turns out to be heteromorphic is hardly surprising in view of the fact that this is a caste society. To say that that great bone of contention, the caste system, is alive and well and living in Chamarajanagar is no more than the truth, but it leaves unanswered the debatable and much debated question: What is caste ?

The classical writers on the subject, from Senart through Bougle, Blunt and Hocart to Hutton, all agree that the institution of caste is sanctioned - indeed prescribed - by the dharmasastras; that it is hierarchical in structure, with the Brahmans at the top and the 'untouchables' at the bottom and innumerable local hierarchies jostling for position in between; that it is ascriptive, in that one's caste is determined by birth; that it has comparatively rigid boundaries, exemplified by the stress laid on caste commensality and endogamy; that it has economic aspects, exemplified by the association of caste with traditional occupations and the traditional interdependence of castes in the total social structure of a given locality; that the high castes can be polluted by contact with the low castes, especially in the fields of food and sex; and finally that it is encompassed by the division of the whole society into the four orders or varnas (Brahman, Ksatrya, Vaisya and Sudra) referred to in the post-Rig-Vedic hymn, the Purasasukta.

The literature on caste is voluminous and fraught with controversy. Any attempt to deal with it faithfully in this thesis would lead us into realms where the open issues have little relevance to the field of fertility. Moreover, to make the attempt would entail trespassing on territory which a master of the subject, Louis Dumont, has made his own. Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus (1970) is the most comprehensive overview of the literature on caste ever undertaken, to my knowledge, and whatever one may think of his personal opinions, his analysis of the premises of other writers on the subject is thorough and searching. It is true that in the past decade new voices have been raised, but the themes remain the same. Perhaps the most useful approach, therefore, would be to review the standpoints of the leading modern protagonists in a brief résumé of those aspects of caste on which Indianists have failed to agree.

Writers on the subject of caste or the components thereof tend to fall into three main groups or categories: those who find the system integrative; those who find it exploitive; and those who are more concerned with its elements as a structure of transactions, or the way the institution survives by adaptation to social change, than with the moral principles concerned. For the purposes of this exegesis I shall characterise these schools of thought as the Integrative, the Exploitive and the Manipulative.

The four leading exponents, as I see it, of the Integrative school among modern writers on the subject are Edmund Leach, Louis Dumont, McKim Marriott and Michael Moffat. The model which Leach proposes is a functional one. For him the caste system is organic, in Durkheim's sense of the word. He sees it as an entity,

> "...with each particular caste and subcaste filling a distinct functional role". (Leach, 1960 p.5)

Moreover this view is by implication a eufunctional one

> "In a 'class' society the 'people at the bottom' are those who have been forced there by the

> "..ruthless processes of economic competition. Their counterparts in a caste society are members of some closely knitted kinship group who regard it as their privileged right to carry out a task from which all other members of the total society are rigourously excluded" (Leach op.cit. p.6).

It is not irrelevant to mention here that Leach undertook his fieldwork in Sri Lanka, where the landowning Goyigama caste comprises the major part of the population, and where this huge élite may well compete for the service of barbers, washermen and other serving castes. But, with due respect, one is bound to point out that, judging from the comments of respondents in Chamarajanagar taluk, the lowest caste do not regard such jobs as the removal of faeces as a privilege but as the only job available to them outside the agricultural free-for-all.

Dumont's model is less partisan, but he seems to subscribe to a view of the system that might be expected of a high-caste person:

> "...the execution of impure tasks by some is necessary to the maintenance of purity for others. The two poles are equally necessary...."(Dumont 1970, p.55).

The implication is that the society is a totality made up of two opposing but complementary and equally essential groups. But at this point a question arises which Dumont neither directly asks nor explicitly answers. It is evident that the untouchable is necessary to the Brahman on the ritual plane. But in what way are the high castes ritually necessary to the untouchable ? Here the argument seems to have shifted to the economic plane, for the untouchables need the higher castes for their livelihood. It has been suggested (by Anthony Good, personal communication), that Brahman priests, at least, are ritually necessary to the low castes because only they can perform the worship which alone maintains the cosmos. I will return to this point later. Its relevance to the present context lies in the fact that

for Dumont the institution of caste is above all a religious phenomenon, and moreover one that thus unifies the diversity of all India. Taking as his starting point Bouglé's three main principles of caste, hereditary specialisation, hierarchical organisation and reciprocal repulsion, Dumont transforms them into an idiom of his own, confirming and developing Bouglé's claim that

> "...in Hindu civilisation it is religious beliefs above all rather than economic tendencies, that fix the rank of each group" (Bouglé, 1908: p.39).

Dumont distinguishes the ranking of status, which for him is essentially religious and which he calls hierarchy in its true etymological sense, from that of economic and political power, which, though important in practice, is always subordinated to hierarchy, that is, to ritual status. He reduces Bouglé's three principles to one fundamental principle, the structural opposition of purity and pollution.

> "This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation, because the pure and the impure must be kept apart, and underlies the division of labour because pure and impure occupations likewise must be kept separate. The whole is founded on the necessary and hierarchical co-existence of the two opposites (Dumont, 1970: p.43).

Marriott has a foot in two of the camps, the Integrative and the Manipulative. In his Caste Ranking and Food Transactions (Marriott 1968), his matrix analysis considers manipulative behaviour, but the model implicit in his work as a whole is one of all-India unity in diversity. Everyone accepts the caste system while at the same time struggling to retain or to achieve higher status within it.

The latest adherent to the Integrative school of thought is Michael Moffat, whose study of an untouchable community in Tamilnadu convinced him that "there is

"..a pervasive and continuous social hierarchy marked by relative purity and pollution" (Moffat,1979; p.29) He takes issue with such exponents of the Exploitive school as Gough, Mencher and Berreman, describing their models as 'disjunctive' and dismissing their arguments in a somewhat cavalier manner. Before returning to discuss his position in more detail it may therefore be helpful if we move on at this point to take a look at the reasoning of the opposition.

The four leading modern advocates of the exploitive school are perhaps Kathleen Gough, G.D. Berreman, André Béteille and Joan Mencher. At the beginning of the sixties Gough had this to say:

> "The inequalities of the system were justified... by the doctrine of rebirth....It seems doubtful whether the lower castes even traditionally subscribed to these beliefs. They appear chiefly to have provided the higher castes with a rationale for their privileges. The Pallans did not appear to have heard of them, and when questioned denied them with merriment" (Gough, 1960: p.54).

Berreman's position is opposed to that of Leach:

> "India is frequently cited as an example of a society in which people of deprived and subject status are content with their lot. On the basis of my research and the literature I maintain that this is not accurate" (Berreman,1966 p.121).

There is a tendency among some writers on caste, he claims, to see the system as operating in the past as a golden age of consensus, which fails to account for the attempts recurrent through Indian history to reject the system (cf. F. Fuchs,1950,1965; Nilakanta Sastri, 1958,1963), nor for the chronic and readily expressed resentment against the system on the part of the low castes. Berreman's arguments are rather extreme: caste is unequivocally equated with class and with racism.

Béteille's by contrast is cooler and less partisan:

> "There is evidence to show that hierarchy and social inequality - as both behaviour and value - is not a mystic quality of the Hindus but can be studied systematically on a comparative basis". (Beteille,1969: p.29)

The implication here is that the difference between the Hindu model of social inequality and those of other, Western, societies, is not one of kind but of degree. Whether or not this is so is a controversial question, but the research of such writers as Fuchs, Sastri and the contributors to M. Mahar's The Untouchables in Contemporary India (Mahar, [ed.], 1972), endorses the position of the exploitive school.

Joan Mencher, described by Moffat as a sceptic and demystifier of caste, is forthright on the subject:

> "Looked at from the bottom up, the system has two striking features. First, for the people at the lowest end of the scale, caste has functioned...as a very effective system of exploitation. Second, one of the functions of the system has been to prevent the formation of social classes with any commonality of interest and unity of purpose" (Mencher, 1974; p.469)

Moffat rather unkindly implies that Mencher et al. are trying to be different: "Ethnography that discovers something new is rewarding" (Moffat op.cit. p.23) The untouchables he studied, he says, behaved in a manner similar to caste Hindus, even to worshipping personal, family, lineage and territorial deities, both all-India and local.

> "Those persons who are, in egalitarian terms, the most oppressed members of Indian society are also among the truest believers in the system that oppresses them" (Moffat op.cit.p.403).

Djurfelt and Lindberg would not agree. Their study, also undertaken in Tamilnadu, about three years before that of Moffat, left them with a different impression:

> "The incomplete spread of the upper caste world points to the importance of clearly distinguishing between the caste system as an ideology and as a social...or ritual practice rooted in the relations of production."
> (Djurfelt and Lindberg, op.cit. 1974: p.211)

In the dichotomous impressions presented by these anthropologists their values are revealed. Moffat, wedded to the concept of the unity of Indian culture, sees his low caste villagers as embracing the caste system, while the Marxist co-authors have a different perception of the behaviour of villagers in the same region. It is interesting to note that the exploitive school tends to discuss caste and class as different in degree while the integrative school sees them as different in kind. Djurfelt and Lindberg find "A strong but not perfect correlation between caste and class" in their area, (op.cit.p.216). Where class is at variance with caste one can expect, they claim, to see changes in the ideological universe.

The viewpoints of selected writers on the Manipulative aspects of caste will be touched on shortly. My principal concern at this juncture is to attempt to reconcile the opposing opinions of the two schools discussed above in the light of Chamarajanagar attitudes to caste. To begin with, 'system' is not the word I would choose to describe the state of affairs in the taluk, although the fact that caste is all-pervading there is undeniable. Neither is 'structure' a suitable alternative, except perhaps in the sense of Levi-Straussian structuralism: a structured way of perceiving. The term jati is used for caste, but it can also be translated as 'type', 'kind' or 'sort' . Informants agree that it can mean either 'culture-group' or 'ethnic group', giving rise to stereotypes such as "this caste is aggressive" or "that caste is puritanical". In other words a caste in Chamarajanagar is equivalent to a nationality, a miniature human 'race' in the popular sense of the word. R.L. Stirrat writes of a community of Sri Lanka Catholics who recognise caste but do not entertain the idea of ritual pollution as conceiving of caste as a natural phenomenon rather than as a social or ritual category (Stirrat, 1975). This is precisely the impression 'Nagar people

give when members of one community discuss another. For instance, when the question of intercaste marriage came up, in general discussion or private interview, someone always mentioned a case where an Indian had married a Briton or another foreigner, thus equating intercaste marriage with inter-nationality or inter-race marriage. Claude Levi-Strauss maintains that '...Castes picture themselves as natural species...'(Levi-Strauss 1966: p.127). Leach, too, writes of caste ideology as envisaging castes as different species (Leach op.cit.,1960:P.7) But these interpretations fail to take cognizance of the practice of hypergamy, where it occurs, or the objection to hypogamy. I would maintain that in Chamarajanagar castes see each other as ethnic groups. Thus to Dumont's definition: 'Caste is a state of mind' (1966: p.27), we might add, 'Caste is a state of nature'. But it is not as simple as that. Caste is also a state of culture, or at least of sub-culture, a local group of individuals adhering to particular cultural norms. Perhaps this is why the idea of intercaste, or inter-race marriage is acceptable, even admirable, to 'Nagar people when it occurs among the big-city élite, but delightfully scandalous when it occurs among the non-Westernised inhabitants of the taluk and truly shocking within their own kutumba or bilateral family group.

In Mysore District caste is more often than not referred to as 'community', and to the observer as well as the actor 'Nagar society appears to be a loosely structured aggregate of communities, each possessing its own collective representations while sharing with all the others a number of universal, though frequently conflicting, collective representations.

Given these twin bases to the local ideology of caste, the ethnic and the sub-cultural, in what way

does the emic view of caste in the taluk reflect on the etic controversy discussed above ? It depends, of course on which emic view one has in mind. When I discussed caste with Harijans out of hearing of other castes they were unanimous in their opinion that the caste system had originally been the invention of "the rich" to make sure that they always had people to do the heavy and dirty work for them. They certainly did not give the impression that they thought Brahman priests necessary for the maintenance of the cosmos, although in the context of the big devastana it is possible that they could not envisage approaching the deities enshrined there except through the Brahman priests. But then Lingayat priests are also needed as officiants at some shrines. It is difficult to deny that seen from the bottom caste does appear to bear a close resemblance to class, apart from its ethnic component. (cf. Joan Mencher, The Caste System Upside Down, 1974.) It is clear that Chamarajanagar untouchables perceive themselves as oppressed by the system and they deny its rationale in just the same way as those studied by Gough, Berreman and Mencher did. The fact that Moffat's untouchable villagers emulated the higher castes in their worship of various deities and in other types of behaviour fails to refute this weight of evidence. In any case the worship of the only deities they know of in the only way they know is hardly proof of approval of the whole social system. It simply shows that when human beings are stuck in a specific role system they will try to manipulate it to their own advantage in one way or another.

An example of this is Scarlett Epstein's account of the way Harijans refused to allow a party of almost destitute immigrant Voddas to use their well. Voddas are stonemasons and caste Hindus, but

the fact that in this situation they were less powerful than the Harijans enabled the latter to taste power for once in the only way available to them (Epstein, 1973). To my mind Moffat is confusing faute de mieux conformity to a given social system because it is there with acceptance of the philosophic rationale by which the system places the actor at the bottom of the heap. It also seems that every group everywhere needs some other group to look down upon. Asked which jati he would allow his daughter to marry into, a member of the Jarumallai community, the lowest untouchable group in 'Nagar, replied with a laugh, "Well, any of them naturally, except of course the Right Hand ones." The ancient system of Right and Left Hand caste dichotomy of south India described by Brenda Beck (Beck, 1972) is now more or less moribund in Chamarajanagar except among the untouchables. I suspect they need to keep it going so as to have a community to reject.

The central theme of the manipulative school in the literature of caste is that of the crucial importance of economic status for the achievement of upward mobility in the system. F.G. Bailey's Caste and the Economic Frontier and Caste, Tribe and Nation (Bailey, 1957, 1960), O.M. Lynch's The Politics of Untouchability (Lynch, 1970), and W.L. Rowe's studies of achievement of upward mobility by low castes, (Rowe, 1968), all emphasise the necessity for the accruement of wealth prior to take-off. Once the financial boost has been secured it can be deployed in the acquisition of status-bearing attainments. If historians are correct this process has been going on throughout much of India's history, providing its mite of substantiation for Marx's theory of Economic Determinancy.

So what do Chamarajanagar people - or those among them with sufficient education - mean when they say, as they often do, that caste (jati or matha) is turning into class (rangada or classu)? We are presented here with a semantic problem. As S. Ossowski puts it, 'The ambiguity of the term 'class' makes it difficult to find one's bearings among the divergencies of the different viewpoints involved.' (Ossowski, 1963: p.121). I believe they are referring to the same phenomenon as that characterised by Bailey et al., transferred to the individual plane. Today, with the immense respect with which education is held in India, especially Western education, ('modern' or 'English' are the synonyms used in south India), and the conviction, despite white-collar unemployment, that it is the sole path to success, education is equated with prestige. High status may be acquired expeditiously through education combined with Westernised good manners. As mentioned earlier, in 'Nagar people say they will entertain or be entertained by Harijans "If they are cultured", meaning if they are sufficiently well off and Westernised. Conversely, a newly wealthy young Brahman of my acquaintance was turned down when he applied for admittance to an élite club because, I was told by a member, he was "not cultured", in spite of the fact that he had built himself a smart modern villa with a flush pedestal w.c. The truth was that he lacked education. So wealth in 'Nagar is a necessary but not the sole determinant of high status and upward mobility. In the past wealth with the trappings of a pure and therefore prestigious life style was required: vegetarianism, teetotalism, celibacy or extreme continence, and the avoidance of polluting activities. Today, the route to social acceptability is a university degree, preferably combined with inherited wealth, a thriving self-made business or secure financial status arrived at through a Government post or a job in one of the nationalised industries.

Education has always been greatly valued in India. The prestige of the Brahmans derived as much from their association with scholarship in the past as their purity. Today it is agreed in Chamarajanagar that the concept of Brahman purity is mainly a theoretical one. Most Brahmans in the area have adopted Western ideals or those of Bhakti (devotional) sects which seek salvation through the love of God rather than through cleaving to a pollution-free regimen. The others are the focus of cynical commentary on their assumption of ritual superiority. But there is a general belief - a collective representation in fact - that they are by definition intelligent. For instance local gossip had it that the twin children of a certain couple of a merchant caste were so successful at university because they were not the offspring of the putative father but of a Brahman electrician engaged to wire the house in his absence on duty. "And that," alleged the scandalmongers, "is why Ashok and Prema are so intelligent".

Observing that 'India has shown a strong propensity to transform rather than to supersede traditional.... structures' L.I. and S.H. Rudolph argue that the traditional unit of association, caste, is still the unit of association today, but has changed its character, in that it is now politically self-conscious. Caste associations now press for places in administration and education and for political representation instead of demanding temple entry and shared wells. The hold of ritual rank on social standing has declined, they say, as twice-born norms and symbols have become at once more accessible and less relevant. (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967). Anil Bhatt concurs, pointing out that the low castes which in the past claimed higher ritual status now work for recognition as low or backward castes to obtain the benefits of Government protective legislation. Asked for his definition of caste a 'Nagar Gowda gave it as his considered opinion that, whatever they had been in the past, castes

were now political groups. "Nearly all the communities have sabhas" (associations) he said "and they are all trying to get themselves classified as backward". On the face of it this situation presents a bizarre reversal of the traditional picture of caste, but if castes are regarded as aggregates of individuals seek- to manipulate their social environment and to maximise such assets as they may possess, I suggest that all that has happened is that the means to power and prestige have changed or are in the process of changing.

In Chamarajanagar the higher castes tend to have a paternalistic attitude towards the untouchables, strongly tinged nowadays with bitterness and anxiety because of the present Government policy of favouring the Scheduled Castes to the detriment of the higher communities. My untouchable labourer is a good honest man and a faithful servant. Those Harijan neighbours have become impossibly uppity and uncooperative since they got their own land. Djurfeldt and Lindberg claim that 'an ongoing change in caste relations is evident....The heterogenous effects of the new production relations make Harijan emancipation a class privilege'. (op.cit.: p.226-7). When a rich cultivator and an agricultural labourer confront each other, they remind us,

> 'two men of different jati also frequently meet. The participants tend to conceive of the class relation as an inter-caste relation. The power vested in the dominant party by the production relations also allows him to impose the traditional hierarchical relation on his subordinate' (op cit: p.251)

So, is caste in 'Nagar "turning into class" or is it now inextricably confused with class as Djurfeldt and Lindberg imply ? I think both these things are true up to a point, but this does not mean that caste is disappearing. On the contrary caste as category and ethnic community is preserved and even emphasised by politicisation. What does seem to be happening is (1) that the criteria of caste are

changing and (2) that caste as ritual hierarchy is weakening because (3) there are other routes to prestige than that of upward mobility in the caste system.

While there is still a good deal of respect in Chamarajanagar for 'purity', in the sense of asceticism, the idea of 'pollution' has lost much of its force and it is evident that little more than lip-service is paid to it. (The question of the purity of women is a different matter and will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter). A Brahman of my acquaintance, asked whether he would invite an ordinary non-'cultured' Harijan into his house, replied after consideration that it depended on whether or not his mother was there. Old women are still great arbiters of traditional behaviour, this being one of their few fields of power. On one occasion when I was dining with an orthodox high caste joint family while the widowed mother was away on a visit, one of the sons, seeing me struggling to break a tough chapatti with my right hand, said with a conniving grin, "Go on, use your left hand. We all do when Amma isn't here". (The left hand is of course ritually proscribed for use in polite transactions since it is reserved for ritually polluting tasks). Likewise the concept of menstrual pollution is diminishing. While attending the thi-thi (memorial) ceremony for the father of a 'Nagar friend I was told that his wife could not be present because she was mane horage, (outside the house) or menstruating. But this did not prevent her from walking in and out of the room in which the ceremony was held, pausing to chat with those engaged in it, including the Brahman priest.

However, 'pollution' is not the only stigma which helps to keep the lowly in what the higher castes believe to be their proper stations. Poverty

necessitates the undertaking of manual labour, which, though not officially recognised as a concomitant of caste, is very much one of class. Manual labour is something for which the average Indian has a strong aversion which has nothing to do with laziness and much to do with social status. Srinivas mentions this aversion, the fact that an educated or well-off person is not expected to carry heavy objects or do any kind of manual work, and the fact that any Indian who can afford it employs as many servants as possible, as indicative of deep-seated attitudes (Srinivas 1962). Certainly everyone in Chamarajanagar who can afford to be is a practised delegator, passing work downward from one level to another until it finally gets done by those who are often the least capable of carrying it out successfully by virtue of the fact that they are uneducated, underpaid and sometimes undernourished. It will be remembered that mention was made in a previous chapter of a smallholder who preferred to lose his onion crop rather than suffer the indignity of picking off the flowers himself. I constantly caused either consternation or mirth by carrying loads myself, especially of firewood when staying in the hills. These would sometimes be wrested from me by friendly passers-by who declared that it was "not right" that I should carry burdens. Once when a group of labourers was sheltering from a rainstorm on my verandah one of them introduced himself as a cousin of my landlord. "But his family pretend not to know us," he said, "Because I have to work with my hands". On my tactlessly referring to this meeting later, the landlord was so embarrassed that I had to let the matter drop. But, as in the case of intercaste marriage, if someone already in possession of ample prestige has the courage to flout public opinion the action may be admired. The same smallholder who so feared to lose face in rescuing his own crop on another occasion pointed out with admiration a young man ankle-deep in a paddy field who

turned out to be the son of a rich landowner recently returned home with a degree in agriculture and apparently so Westernised that to be seen labouring on his own land held no terrors for him. My friend was much impressed.

The ability to hold two conflicting beliefs and to voice them both, sometimes within a short span of time, is strikingly noticeable in south India (while of course by no means confined to any one country), and is a characteristic which frequently bedevilled the survey I carried out in 1979-80. S.B Daniels' paper in S.Wadley's (ed.) The Powers of Tamil Women, discusses this problem of conflicting models in south Indian culture (Daniels, 1980). The way two contradictory viewpoints may be held by a single individual and expressed with no apparent sense of inconsistency is interesting, if confusing, to the etic observer, and is clearly the product of conflicting collective representations within the community or within south Indian society as a whole.

Be that as it may, the fact that in Chamarajanagar what Bhatt calls 'status summation' (Bhatt, op. cit., 1975), between caste and class is on the whole still evident means that the low castes therefore comprise the majority of manual labourers, and the fact that they do manual labour is yet another reason for looking down on them. They therefore have good cause to believe that the caste system is all about one section of society doing the heavy and dirty work for the rest.

Another junction point between caste and class is the question of emulation. As far as it is possible to ascertain two dichotomous models for emulation (apart from the Saniyasi or renouncer) existed in traditional India (cf. Dumont,1970), that of the Brahman varna, the scholarship and purity model, and that of the Ksatriya varna, the warrior and temporal power model. Today

these two models are represented by the twin processes described by M.N. Srinivas as 'Sanskritisation and Westernisation' (Srinivas,1962), of which more below. According to Anil Bhatt the 'sanskritic' model, while by no means obsolete, is fast losing ground in modern India to the Western one.

> 'The important change is that the model of emulation is no longer provided by the Brahmans or any other high caste.. ..the context of emulation is not sanskritic but urban and modern characteristics.' (Bhatt op.cit.,1975: p.6)

Referring to the British during their hegemony in India as the 'new Ksatriyas' Srinivas outlines the process by which the Brahmans, the very group which formed one of the old models of emulation, themselves became the first to emulate the new-Ksatriya Western one.

> 'In Mysore State the Brahmans led the other castes in Westernisation. This was only natural as the Brahmans possessed a literary tradition...They left their natal villages for cities such as Mysore and Bangalore to obtain the benefit of an English education, an indispensable passport to employment under the new dispensation'. (Srinivas,1962:51-2).

The trend towards emulation of a Western model has been a central theme of André Béteille's contribution to the literature of caste:

> 'The reason why the old divisions have lost their traditional significance is that new ones have begun to emerge. These are based on education, occupation and income, and have their own status symbols.' (Béteille, 1969: p.231).

Mandelbaum writes of people trying for upward mobility in the traditional way by emulating the 'ritual prerogatives and life-styles' of the twice-born castes, one aspect of which is the strict control of women. But, he says, this path to higher status is less trodden than heretofore.

> 'Competition for status is still a central feature of village life, but the symbols of high status and the terms of the competition have somewhat altered. There are village men who fought strenuously for the right to wear the sacred thread...who find their sons uninterested in that ancient privilege, although they are most interested in acquiring contemporary insignia of high status. Modern education has become a requirement for the most desired kinds of livelihood ' (Mandelbaum op.cit. p.58).

In Chamarajanagar the model for class ranking seems to be that of the 'new Ksatriya', and the new élite are anxious to emulate it. They hope to join Western-type associations such as the Rotary Club and the tennis club. They build new villas and plant lawns on the outskirts of the town, and furnish them with sofas, dining tables and chairs, refrigerators and record players. They aspire to the ownership of a small car (driven by the husband. So far no 'Nagar wife has learned to drive). A 'modern' house and its appurtenances is one of the symbols of having 'arrived'. Scions of traditional joint family corporate households who have done well on their own tend to break away after marriage and buy, build or rent a modern house. At present these values exist alongside traditional ideas which place a high value on the purity arising from asceticism, giving the taluk citizens two separate routes for advancement. Members of the lower castes do not hesitate to switch from one to the other as the occasion arises, and are not particularly disturbed by any inconsistency they may betray in doing so as they try to move forward and upward on two fronts simultaneously.

An example of this dual approach is that of a young Harijan doctor who had achieved his position through hard work and intelligence, and was busy consolidating it, on the one hand through membership of 'élite' clubs, and on the other by restricting his wife and denying that his

jati allowed divorce and remarriage to women. He had not yet discovered that the relatively Westernised men to whose peer-group he hoped to belong and who were happy to accept him on the grounds of his education, income and job, looked down on him for his adoption of a 'sanskritisation' which they were busy putting behind them. They were, in fact, sorry for his wife. As Srinivas says,

> 'In the lower levels of the hierarchy castes are taking up customs which the Brahmans are busy discarding. As far as these castes are concerned it looks as though sanskritisation is a necessary prelude to Westernisation' (Srinivas, 1962,p.55).

Srinivas's use of the term 'sanskritisation' for the emulation of traditional and orthodox patterns of culture and behaviour has been criticised, but not, to my mind, very helpfully. J.F. Staal objects to the term because the connection between 'sanskritisation' and Sanskrit is not very close.

> 'Sanskritisation as used by Srinivas and other anthropologists is a complex concept...The concept of Sanskrit culture, in terms of which we could attempt to clarify the term sanskritisation is not without ambiguities.' (Staal, 1963 p.275).

Nevertheless, Staal admits that 'the concept has been fruitful, paving the way for the description and analysis of numerous phenomena' (Staal, op.cit. p.275). O.M. Lynch believes the concept to be of limited utility on the grounds that it is 'culture-bound'. He suggests 'élite emulation' as a better term (Lynch, 1968: p.237). But 'élite emulation' subsumes Westernisation as well, while Srinivas was seeking to differentiate opposing types of emulative behaviour. I have chosen to contiue to use the term 'sanskritisation' for want of a better one. 'Brahmanisation' might do but it is a little too specific, perhaps, and 'sanskritisation' has been understood by Indianists for the past twenty years.

Another term adopted by Srinivas to describe a fairly complex phenomenon is that of the 'Dominant Caste' in any particular area.

> 'Numerical strength, economic and political power, ritual status and Western education and occupation are the most important elements of domination....When a caste enjoys all or most of the elements of dominance it may be said to have decisive dominance.' (Srinivas,1959: pp. 4-5).

Although this concept has proved a useful one for anthropologists in the course of their fieldwork in divers parts of India, especially the South, it too has attracted critical attention, partly because the situation where a single caste dominates any one area is by no means universal. T.K. Oommen agrees that where a caste combines all the attributes of dominance there is no problem, but, he submits, the assumptions that dominance is always limited to one caste in an area, that power is an ascriptive attribute and that village power structure remains stable over time, all diminish the usefulness of the concept as an academic tool today (Oommen, 1970: pp74,77). S.C. Dube points out that where there are 'pronounced inequalities' between individuals within a caste described as dominant, so that the wealthier and more powerful members exploit the weaker, it is not appropriate to call the caste dominant (Dube,1968: p.59). While accepting the validity of these arguments, it seems to me that the concept of the dominant caste is heuristically useful as long as departures from the implied principle are noted and discussed.

Within Chamarajanagar taluk some thirty-odd local jati, not counting temporary migrant groups from elsewhere, interact with each other in one way or another. The account of them given below places them in a very rough (attributional) hierarchical order arrived at through a process of informal but persistent questioning of members of most communities in the area. This

is not to say that any two individuals picked at random would not argue over the grading. For instance, several informants, and not only Lingayats, placed Vaisnava Brahmans below Lingayats for no reason that I could fathom except perhaps that they are followers of Vishnu in a strongly Saivite area, possibly due to Lingayat influence. To attempt to arrive at an interactional (mainly food-acceptance) matrix on the lines of McKim Marriot's (Marriot, 1968), would have been difficult and possibly misleading as restrictions on commensality have been so much relaxed in the past thirty years that various permutations and combinations of 'clean' jati now tend to interdine if the food is vegetarian, but claim that in the past if they ate with any other community at all it was only with sub-castes of their own community. This claim seems to be at least partly substantiated by the Mysore Gazetteer of 1897, which states, e.g., that the Panchala, or the five local artisan jati, would not even at that date take food even from Brahmans. The same was true of Lingayats, Jains and Vaisyas.

Because vegetarianism is associated with purity the vegetarians have been placed at the top of the list, but as usual things are not as simple as they seem. Some Banajigas and Ursu are not vegetarian traditionally and some Jetti and Naidu are vegetarian. Moreover, unlike most parts of India, there is no consensus even at the top, since Lingayats and Jains claim complete equality with, if not superiority to, Brahmans in this area. We begin then by bracketing Madhwa and Smarta Brahmans together, equalled - or followed closely - by Lingayats and Jains and then by Vaisnava Brahmans. There are comparatively few Brahmans in the taluk and not many of them own land. They are not a powerful group in the area and some of them are very poor. Those who are not priests tend to be teachers, clerks, accountants and small business

men. They are also numbered among drivers, mechanics and Government servants of various sorts. Lingayats, the biggest and most ubiquitous community in the area, will be discussed in more detail below. The Jains, who belong to a sect as old as Buddhism, with a tradition of asceticism and extreme adherence to ahisma, (non-violence), are mostly well-to-do merchants of the town, where they have their own temple. The Goldsmiths, Blacksmiths and Carpenters are members of the Panchala, the Artisan guilds. They consider themselves to be dvija, the twice-born of Brahmanic culture. The Goldsmiths are the recognised heads of this group of jati. The Vaisyas, an exclusive and wealthy community who have rather confusingly adopted the title of the third varna for their jati name, are more 'sanskritised' in their culture than is the average Brahman in contemporary 'Nagar. The Dasa Banajigas, of whom more below, are another respectable merchant community of the town. The Ursu are the jati to which the royal family of Mysore belong. The Jettis also wear the sacred thread and claim twice-born status, but the fact that they are mostly non-vegetarian tends to demote them in the eyes of other communities. The Sholigas, to be discussed below, have managed in the past to make their claim to relatively high status stick through being exclusive over food transactions, although they eat meat, including wild (but not domesticated) pig, but of course not beef. Kurubas are one of the three jati of Gowdas (cultivators) in Mysore District. They are content to call themselves members of the Sudra varna - if they think in those terms at all - like the huge Okkaliga jati which takes the place of the Lingayats in many other districts of Karnataka, but as Gowdas they are a respected, if impoverished, community, placed level with Jettis by all but the Jettis themselves. Naidus are a generally prosperous community of cultivators

originating in Tamilnadu. Naikars and Rajaparavar-naikars are other, but less esteemed cultivator-communities, mostly labourers. The large jati of Upuligas will be further discussed below. Iddagas, Kumbar Shettis (Potters), Ganigar Shettis (oil pressers), Kaniyar (Medicine men), Hellavas (Beggar Bards), and Shukaligas (Gypsies), are all 'clean' low castes. Below them come Nayinda (Barbers),and Madiwar Shettis (Washermen), lower down the scale because of their professional dealing with human detritus, but not so low as they are in some other parts of India. Handidombaveru (Pigherders) are a borderline category only saved from untouchability by the fact that they do not eat beef. Beef-eating is the true citerion of untouchability. Of the three local untouchable communities, the Harijans or Holeaveru are traditionally agricultural labourers. (More about them shortly). Madigas, much lower, are associated with the removal and skinning of dead animals and with shoe-making and other leather work. Jarumallais, originating in Tamilnadu, are sweepers. Like Madigas and unlike Harijans, they are people of the Left Hand.

It should be remembered that the majority of members of these jati are not engaged in their traditional occupations but work in agriculture, trade or service jobs or even occasionally in the professions. Nevertheless to a considerable extent their traditional occupations designate their status, unless wealth and education combine to take them out of the caste hierarchy and place them well up in that of class.

We now come to the six communities, or groups of communities chosen, as mentioned in my introductory chapter, to be paradigmatic of the social structure of the taluk. The circumstances governing the choice will be further expanded upon in the chapter on Methodology, but a brief explanation seems appropriate at this point. Lingayats were chosen because of their numerical dominance. Quite

simply there are more Lingayats in the taluk than any other caste. They are ubiquitous. Upuligas and Harijans are the next two biggest communities. It would be impossible to discuss the ethnography of the taluk without paying them especial attention. Banajigas and Jettis are influential in the town, especially the Dasa Banajigas, an old-established group. And Sholigas are the only indigenous jati of the hills. These six jati were originally intended to represent separately the caste spectrum of Chamarajanagar. But when it came to planning the survey on the spot (i.e. once I had arrived in the taluk and settled down to consider the categories), it became clear that some of the groups would have to be sub-divided and others combined, for reasons given in Chapter V of this section. Thus of the groups finally decided upon, Lingayats comprise I and II. Banajigas and Jettis, along with such other high castes as Brahmans, Jains and Ursu, were amalgamated into a single 'Other High Caste' category, Group III. Upuligas and Harijans wre combined as a low caste category but sub-divided into Groups IV and V on environmental grounds to be explained in Chapter V below. Sholigas remained as Group VI.

The Lingayats. As a sect and a caste the Lingayats have been chronicled by, among others, N. Sastri, (1963), S. Fuchs, (1965), and W. McCormack, (1973). Although the true Lingayat stronghold is north-west Karnataka, pockets exist in other parts of the State where they, rather than the Okkaligas, are dominant numerically and influentially. Chamarajanagar taluk is one of these. They are now, as they were in the past, the principal landowners here, especially Lingayat Gowdas - as might be expected - though Lingayat Shettis, or merchants, have also invested in land around the town. The jati began as a sect, founded as a revolutionary movement against Jainism, and indeed against Brahmanism, by Basava,

Prime Minister to King Bijjala Kalechuri, usurper of the Calukya throne in Kalyan in 1156 A.D. The sect, or caste, as it became is monotheistic, worshipping Siva along with his sakti Parvati as the One God, rejecting (in theory) the authority of the Vedas and that of the Brahmans and following its own sacred texts, notably the Vacana Sastra, the Lingayat 'Bible'. All Lingayats must wear from the day of their initiation, (generally tied round the neck in the case of men and round the upper arm for women), the Istalinga, a miniature Lingam encased in a silver container. The lingam is regarded in orthodox Hinduism as the phallic symbol of Siva, but for devout Lingayats it represents the macrocosmic Mahalinga or Universal Soul. Every Lingayat must be initiated into the faith, though born into the jati, by a guru, who may be male or female, attached to a local matha or monastery. All members of the sect/jati are strict vegetarians and supposed to abstain from alcohol. They bury rather than burn their dead. The Lingayat creed rejects the doctrines of caste and pollution and claims equality for all classes and both sexes. Stephen Fuchs writes of the sect as originally a movement for social reform.

> 'Basava was...a social revolutionary. He abolished the caste system in his creed and reformed the social order...by favouring the lower and underprivileged classes against the high castes in spite of his own Brahman origin.' (Fuchs, 1965:p.253).

It must be admitted that on the whole and with the exception of the neo-reformists, who are mostly educated and Westernised, little more than lip-service is paid by the Lingayats in our region today to the egalitarian principles of the founder. Their puritanism is close to that of Hindu orthodoxy. They refuse to allow low castes into their houses, restrict their women to a greater or lesser extent, demand dowry. As Dumont has observed,

> 'Indian society and religion on the one hand have produced a rich growth of movements considered heretical to a certain extent, and on the other hand they have tended to absorb formerly heretical inventions.' (Dumont, 1970: p.36).

Lingayat influence in the region has been strong in the past, (Lingayatism was the State religion under the Wodeyar Maharajas from the 11th to the 17th centuries), and it remains so today. Traditionally they were a proselytising sect, and although missionary fervour has waned in the process of 'routinisation of charisma', a strong element of it remains in the propensity for promoting education by endowing scholastic establishments. We have seen that the private secondary school and the college in Chamarajanagar town are both Lingayat foundations. The annual jatre or festival of the town devastana occurs in the month of Shravanna, the time of the Lingayat festival, and its core ceremony is the honouring of Siva and Parvati. It seems as though the Lingayats can truly be said to have decisive dominance in the area, although it is equally true that this huge community is internally stratified economically and that there are many poor Lingayats.

Reverting now to the other high castes, two groups of some importance in the town attracted my attention in the course of my earlier fieldwork. These were the Dasa Banajigas and the Jettis, the first because it was the largest merchant jati of the town, the second because, although a small jati, they have been influential in Mysore District for the past century.

The Dasa Banajigas. Banajigas or Vanajigas, are a large merchant group of Mysore, divided into a number of sub-castes. (Dasa Banajigas were originally bangle sellers). A.L. Basham writes of guilds of merchants mentioned in early Indian literature and inscriptions, some of which became important in the Deccan in mediaeval times. 'One such was the Viravalanjiga, freely/

freely translated as the company of gentleman merchants which....was controlled by a central council in Mysore.' (Basham, 1967: p.225). The Chamarajanagar Banajigas are a highly respected group (in spite of the fact that some of them are very poor), held in such high esteem that they customarily lead the procession when the devastana chariot is pulled round the streets at the time of the annual jatre. They say that they are accorded this honour in spite of their being Vaisnavites at a Saivite festival, for the following reason: in the past a kind of local Justice of the Peace, who was also supposed to be a moral arbiter, would be appointed by the king to serve a given area. He was known as the Desiya Shetti, (literally Merchant of the Province). In the 19th century a member of the Chamarajanagar Banajiga community was appointed Desiya Shetti, and won the respect and affection of all the people, laying up a store of goodwill from which his descendants still benefit over a hundred years later. Today 'Nagar Banajigas are an adaptable group who will turn to cultivation, milling or manufacturing if these seem profitable occupations, who combine conservative elements with others who are briskly Westernised, whose women are on the whole less restricted than those of communities such as the Jettis or Vaisyas, and who can boast of a community member who in 1980 was President of the Rotary Club.

The Jettis. This is a jati whose original occupation was professional wrestling and gymnastics. They wear the sacred thread of the 'twice-born' and, in Thurston's words 'consider themselves to be of superior caste, never descending to any degrading work.' (Thurston, 1909). According to the Mysore Gazetteer nearly half the Jettis who originally migrated South from Andhra Pradesh settled in Mysore District under

the protection of the Maharajas. This state of affairs lasted until the deposition of the princes in 1972, and some Jettis still benefit from the palace connection through pensions or houses which were once royal property. The father-in-law of a Chamarajanagar Jetti was superintendent of the Mysore zoo, and his father's duty was to tie the turbans of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. The Jetti community belongs to the large Rachevar group of castes, who may be cultivators, artisans, performers or members of the professional classes. Today Jettis are mostly farmers or business men. Though they consider themselves to be a dvija caste they are traditionally non-vegetarian and drink alcohol. This, combined with their association with a martial art, supports their claim (in their eyes, that is), to belong to the Ksatriya or warrior varna. However, they are having some trouble in self-definition today, some of them turning to Westernisation while others, modelling themselves on the Lingayats or traditional Brahmans, have eschewed meat and alcohol. Jetti women, in Chamarajanagar at least, are restricted to the house unless accompanied, on fairly rare occasions, by mother or mother-in-law or close male relatives.

Turning now to the lower castes, two groups were selected as representative, principally on the grounds of their ubiquity, second only to that of the Lingayats. These are the Upuligas and the Harijans, comprising the second and third largest communities in the area, who make up the majority of the agricultural labourers in the taluk, though by no means all of them are landless, a large proportion of them having a share in family fields.

The Upuligas. This jati takes its name from its traditional occupation, the manufacture of earth-salt and of saltpetre. Uppu means salt in the Dravidian languages. This occupation was combined with the

digging of irrigation tanks (kere) and wells, bricklaying, building and road works. While the salt trade has more or less vanished the other kinds of heavy labour with which Upuligas are associated still employ the majority of the community. In Chamarajanagar they specialise in heavy stevedore work, driving heavy vehicles, house-building, and in work on the Billigirirangan coffee estates. The women are as hard-working as the men and it is customary that women work alongside the men at manual work. They call themselves Upuliga Shettis, and are often referred to as shettis or traders by other jati, a reference to their past trade in salt. Their villages in the taluk are situated in proximity to kere and are called mollai which may be roughly translated as a place adjacent to water (essential for the production of earth-salt). Because of their location, many mollai-dwelling Upuligas are professional fishermen, (or fisherwomen). Most Upuligas are illiterate and poor. In 'Nagar town the only sizeable factory, the Government silk-yarn mill, is situated at the end of the Upuliga street, and virtually all those employed are Upuliga women. Many of them earn more than do their husbands and are extremely independent. In fact most Upuliga women tend to be tough and independent. In the town the whole community has a fearsome reputation for quarrelling and general aggressiveness, and one informant, speaking of the Upuliga women, remarked with something like awe, "They don't even fear the police." One of their ejmans or leaders complained that his position was no sinecure since it involved the arbitration of disputes, in the course of which he was in danger of being beaten up by both sides. On the coffee estates, however, they are regarded as reliable and hardworking employees, confining their aggression to their domestic affairs.

In contrast to their predisposition to conflict,

Upuligas tend to be devout, with a strong attachmement to their jati deity Muntaswami, by whom they readily get possessed at the time of his annual festival. They also specialise in ritual dancing and fire-walking. As one Upuliga declared, "We take part in God's work". A renowned seer of Chamarajanagar town is an Upuliga girl who is frequently possessed by Adi-Sakti, meaning primary female power, but also the name of a local Upuliga goddess. I attended one of her public seances and was deeply impressed by her magnetic presence and undoubted powers of extra-sensory perception.

Upuligas belong to the 'clean' low castes and do not suffer as many disabilities as falls to the lot of the Harijans. Nevertheless poverty and illiteracy has marked them as a group in spite of their sturdy self-reliance, until, in recent years, awareness of the political aspect of their numerical strength in the area has percolated through to them. In 1975 they forced through, by a complicated process of vote-bargaining, the election to the Presidency of the municipality of the only Upuliga in the taluk with higher education. Curiously enough he is the brother of the young seer. Between them this pair of siblings demonstrate the two sides of Upuliga culture, down-to-earth pragmatism and ecstatic religion.

The Harijans. This large community of traditionally landless labourers, described by the Mysore Gazetteer of 1931 as 'the backbone of cultivation in the area', used to be known, up to twenty-odd years ago, as the Holeyas or Holeaveru. They were in the past the hereditary serfs of the dominant cultivators of Mysore State. According to Thurston their specialisation in agriculture was given recognition by the fact that a Holeya was always called in to settle a land dispute. (Thurston, 1909). This custom has fallen into disuse today, possibly since the introduction of

official land tribunals. The Holeyaru are striving for upward mobility today while doing their best to make use of Government protective policies for the Scheduled Castes. Having annexed Gandhi's term Harijan (child of God) for their jati appellation they have succeeded in getting it accepted, at least in Mysore District. As Harper notes, they are striving to substitute criteria of achievement, an aspect of class, rather than that of ascription, an aspect of caste, which is a radical change. He suggests that their desire to better themselves is aimed at a kind of ideal and general vision of middle-class Indian culture (Harper, 1968). A number of Mysore Harijans have succeeded in availing themselves of the Government legislation on behalf of the Scheduled Castes to obtain for themselves reserved places in schools, colleges, Government service and the State legislature, and some have become Ministers in the State Government. One of these, a recent Minister for Forests, gave a huge acreage of Reserved Forest land in the Yelandur taluk adjoining Chamarajanagar Reserved Forest land to landless labourers of his jati to cultivate. Moreover, where Harijan tenants held land from 'feudal' patrons in return for hereditary service the 1947 Tenancy Act gave them permanent rights to the land at limited rent, and some have achieved outright ownership of their holdings. A steadily increasing number of them enrol in the State schools in the taluk, and there is a large hostel in the town which provides accommodation for Scheduled Caste students.

According to Scarlett Epstein, population growth and the introduction of a cash economy have upset the traditional balance between supply and demand for labour in Mysore and thus introduced an element of instability in labour relations. This has improved the position of rich employers, who can draw on cheap migrant labour, and caused a deterioration in that of poor resident labourers (Epstein, 1973). While migrant labour had not yet

had much impact in Chamarajanagar while I was there instability was certainly apparent in labour relations. Here Harijans are becoming conscious of their numerical strength and the success of some of their individual members had made them aware, unlike the two untouchable castes beneath them in the local hierarchy, that upward mobility is feasible. As Marc Galanter observes, the higher groups among the untouchable castes are the greatest beneficiaries of Government legislation on their behalf, and their disabilities have declined more than those of the lower groups such as sweepers (Galanter,1972). The Harijans are occupationally 'clean', their untouchability deriving from their traditional beef-eating, and that is eschewed by upwardly mobile members of the jati. Among the fifty low caste couples from villages adjacent to the town covered by my 1979-80 survey were three or four who had succeeded in breaking through the barrier, having achieved education, a reasonable and secure income in a Government job, and acceptance as 'cultured' middle-class worthies. Nevertheless as a community they have not taken off. There is a general feeling among the higher castes that they are getting above themselves, and Government discrimination in their favour has aroused resentment. As individuals they are often subjected to slights and inequitable treatment by the high castes.

The ritual element of caste as embodied in ideas about purity/which in this taluk may derive as much from Lingayats as from Brahmans, is still tenacious, though fast diminishing. On the face of it this should present the Harijans with a quandary of the sort described by Jonathan Parry in the case of the Koli caste of Kangra, (Parry,1970), but in fact the Harijan jati of our taluk appear to be unaware of any incongruity in trying to move forward or up along three different, and sometimes conflicting routes at once, those of Westernisation, sanskritisation and political power. They demand land in return for votes and, as landowners, are

assiduous in asserting their rights. An interesting sidelight on the increasing emphasis their leaders place on the power of the vote is the recent legislation brought in by a Harijan Minister for Education in Karnataka forbidding Christian churches to provide free schooling any more for Harijan children, the purpose of which seems to be to prevent their conversion to Christianity, once a favourite method of attempting to escape the caste system.

But the average Harijan family living in the mixed-caste villages nearer the town or on the main road, or in the one-caste hamlets of the interior hinterland are not competing with anybody except their neighbours. They are mostly peaceable but outspoken people who work for long hours on their own or their employers' land. Where they have amassed a little surplus they tend to take time off in which to enjoy it; apart from festival days these are the only holidays they get. Their gods are local deities such as Mariamma, Chamundisvari and Ayappa. Their women mostly go out to work (especially in the more rural parts), do not fear to make their presence felt, and many of them think nothing of roundly abusing their husbands in public, using the insulting neuter gender. Children of both sexes are welcomed, since they both provide assurance for old age, and bridewealth can be asked for girls if the marriage is not between kin.

The Sholigas. The sixth jati chosen for the paradigm is the aboriginal hill tribe, the Sholiga. According to Max Weber a caste is not a tribe, (Weber, 1948: pp.398-9). But a tribe can be, and normally is, categorised as a caste by themselves and others. There are in fact two Sholiga tribes, the Eid Kula (five clans) and the Yerl Kula (seven clans). The latter inhabit the Plateau territory east of the Billigirirangan hills, speak a dialect of Tamil and have little connection with

our area. The Eid Kula Sholiga also call themselves Mallaikadaveru, or Rainforest People. They speak an archaic form of Kannada and live on the Billigiriran-gan hills and nowhere else. Traditionally, or until about 25 years ago, they all lived in podu, small scattered settlements of mud and grass huts in the forests, where they practised a primitive slash-and-burn hoe cultivation of ragi and pulses, moving on every seven years when the soil was exhausted. They have now been settled in a number of larger podu by the Forest Department. They are expert and knowledgeable gatherers, and supplement their diet with a great variety of jungle gleanings, including fruit, fungi, four varieties of tuber, and honey from the tree and cliff hives of wild bees. They also trap deer (illegally) or poach them with hammer-fired or even muzzle-loading guns which are concealed, with equal ingenuity and illegality, from the prying eyes of forest officials and conservationists. They trap, or shoot, wild pig when they can, as well as birds and smaller animals such as the Malabar squirrel and the Grey Langur monkey. They used to rely on trained observation to interpret the movements of wild animals in the forests and on the open hillsides of the range, and were adept at travelling in darkness. The older Sholigas still have hearing highly attuned to animal movement and sound. To walk in the hills with an old Sholiga is to experience new dimensions in perception. They are also skilful trackers and tree-climbers. Most of them work from time to time for the Forest Department at the collection of forest produce such as lichen, when they are not too busy with their own gathering or rather slipshod cultivation, and many of them are employed on the coffee estates, either at such tasks as thinning shade trees or during the crop-picking season. They also sell surplus jungle produce at local weekly shantis or markets in hamlets at the foot of the hills. The women engage in the same activities as do the men except for tree-climbing for honey or to lop shade on the estates.

The chief Sholiga origin myth (there are others) claims descent from a supernatural mother-figure, Niri Sholigayya, whc bore their folk-hero Karayya. They also claim that Ranga, the god of the hills, is their brother-in-law, since he married a Sholiga girl, and this, they say, is what gives them the right to pull the chariot of the deity at his festival held in the Billigirirangan devastana in the Western foothills of the range.

Among the Sholigas are hereditary specialists of both sexes, healers and sorcerors. Sholigas do not believe in metempsychosis and, asked what happens after death, generally reply, "Who knows ?" . One man added to me, laughing ruefully, "We just bury and forget." But it seems likely that there was some traditional belief in life after death, since their dead are buried with ornaments and sometimes with artefacts. They believe that everyone has two souls, which are sisters, and that death only occurs when both souls depart the body together. Hereditary priests called tammadi who are teachers and diviners besides doing the normal work of a lay Sholiga, seek supernatural counsel in a state of trance or possession. There are two main Sholiga festivals in the year, the Rotihabba or bread festival, and the Hosa Ragi Habba, festival of the new ragi, or harvest festival. At both of these the assembled Sholiga men and women sing and dance all night.

Sholiga fathers treat their daughters with affection and regard them with esteem. The parents do not interfere with their daughters' choice of mate and daughters take care of their parents in old age if the sons fail them. One Sholiga woman said to me, "It is better to have a daughter, because daughters will always give their parents food, while it is not at all certain that sons will." On the whole husbands and wives seem to live and let live except in the case of infidelity, which can lead to violent quarrels and divorce. Men are expected to show great respect to

their parents-in-law, but women tend to resent their mothers-in-law and sometimes refuse to share a house with them. Of all the communities in the taluk the status of women among the Sholiga is the highest.

In recent years the State Government has tried with some success to 'uplift' the Sholigas and pin them down to a few large reservations by giving them forest land and encouraging them to become cultivators, for which they show little talent. In one settlement brick-and-tile houses were built for them, but they are only used for the storage of grain. As one Sholiga explained, "When someone dies we burn down that house and build a new one. How can you burn down a brick house ?".

Some Sholigas are not on the whole averse to the attempts to integrate them, and are beginning to adopt the values of the wider society, to the extent of appearing somewhat embarrassed by those of their traditional norms, such as marriage by elopement, which they are learning to regard as uncouth. At the same time some of the younger ones have lost, or are losing, the arts of tracking and other techniques essential to the tribe in the past for hunting and gathering.

There is, moreover, a deep sense of loss of identity, especially among old Sholiga, expressed in almost inarticulate bewailing of the loss of their heritage. This may be manifested in sudden decisions to return to the old ways. In one case a group of Sholiga, some employed on the estate on a permanent basis, and including one who had become quite well-off and successful by Sholiga standards, owning lands at the foot of the hills, decided to return to the site of a remote <u>podu</u> in the wildest part of the hills, which had been abandoned over thirty years previously, and to settle there. Asked what had led them to this decision, one old man replied gravely, "It was in our hearts."

The focus of this chapter must now converge

upon those aspects of caste culture, specifically those of our six representative communities, salient in reference to the study of fertility in the taluk. Ultimately I believe that these can be reduced to three main considerations: the status of women; expectations based on jati culture; and predisposition towards Westernisation. Age at effective marriage, length of lactation, and length of post-partum abstinence, varied among the groups surveyed, as did the type of fertility control used by members of these groups, but although it does appear that these practices had an effect on the differential fertility of these groups, as did such community-linked variables as economic and educational status, I believe that the solution does not lie in simple multi-cultural variation alone. Behind these as a rule minor differences I suspect that more fundamental causes await resolution.

The six jati described above, which not only represent a cross-section of society in the taluk but, numerically speaking, the major portion of it, fall into two well-defined groups. On the one hand are the Lingayats and the other high castes; on the other hand are the Sholigas and the other two low castes, Upuligas and Harijans. The first or high-caste group prohibit divorce for both sexes and remarriage for females, tend to restrict females on the grounds of preservation of their purity, do not approve of their wives working and earning outside the household, and have a ritually justified perception of female inferiority. (This may be contrary to true Lingayat doctrine, but the average Chamarajanagar Lingayat has more or less re-embraced Hindu orthodoxy in such matters). While dowry is not a south Indian tradition except among Brahmans, the custom is creeping in, although now declared illegal, and prestations on the bride's side are expected to be more munificent than on that of the groom's. Altogether, for this group, daughters' weddings cost a lot more than those of sons.

The second, or lower-caste group, have institution-

alised divorce, and re-marriage after divorce or widowhood for both sexes, do not restrict females, who on the whole are expected to work and earn, are not particularly concerned with female purity, and have no ritually justified sense of female inferiority, (although among Harijans at least women are still to a considerable extent second-class citizens). These groups have a tradition of thera or bridewealth. Among Harijans this is the perquisite (supposedly) of the women in the bride's natal family. Among Sholigas it constitutes the groom's family's payment for the wedding feast and gifts to the bride and her family. It may also include manual service by the groom for the bride's parents for a given period.

This dichotomy exemplifies the divide between 'sanskritised' and 'unsanskritised' groups. (I employ Srinivas's usage since none of his critics have come up with a more heuristically useful one and I am prepared to accept his purport myself). Looked at another way it symbolises the division between north Indian, strongly masculinist culture and south Indian weakly masculinist culture proposed by Sopher et al., Miller, Dyson and Moore. Now the crucial point here is that the North has high fertility, while the South has comparatively low fertility. This has also been remarked upon by J.Caldwell, who reminds us of the fact that the birthrate in Karnataka in the early 1980s is only 28 compared to 33 for all India while in the other south Indian states the fertility rate is even lower. (Caldwell, 1982).

In view of all this, low fertility might have been expected of all the lower-caste or unsanskritised groups and higher fertility of the higher-caste or sanskritised groups. In the event this supposition was only partially proved correct in the Chamarajanagar context. The Sholiga, among whom the women are more independent than is the case in any other of the caste-groups studied had the lowest fertility of all. But Lingayats and other

high castes had lower fertility than that of the two low-caste jati This, I believe, is mainly due to the intervention of Westernisation among these groups. 'Status summation' still exists in the area to the extent that, on average, those of higher caste are better off than those of lower caste. Being well off they can afford to give their children the coveted education, especially higher education, which makes for Westernisation, which leads among other things to reduction in family size if only because of the cost of education. If this seems like tautology, there is a kind of spiral of cause and effect involved. Moreover, Brahmans and Lingayats have a scholastic tradition, which, as Srinivas points out, may be a prelude to Westernisation, and since members of these communities, especially Lingayats, formed a large proportion of the high-caste groups surveyed, the intervention of education might be expected to affect the fertility of these groups. It also appeared that the expectation of education for the children of the poorer Lingayats, was an intervening factor. In Caldwell's terms, where parents see the education of their children as a valued asset, so that wealth flows from the older to the younger generation, a reduction of fertility is to be expected. I can think of no other reason for the fact that the more impoverished section of the Lingayat group surveyed had lower fertility than that of the better-off section, and the comments of respondents tend to confirm this theory. This point will be raised again in an ensuing chapter.

Lastly, it should be mentioned here, though the matter will be enlarged upon in the chapter on Methodology, that by the time the survey was finally undertaken the breakdown of the communities chosen as representative of the taluk social structure had been slightly modified. Because the huge and ubiquitous Lingayat group is internally stratified on economic grounds, it was decided that

they should be divided into two groups labelled Richer and Poorer. In the same way the two low castes were divided into two groups, basically more urban and less urban. Members of other high castes, such as Brahmans, Vaisyas and Ursus, were interviewed along with Banajigas and Jettis. The six groups which resulted from this taxonomy were thus no longer single communities, except in the case of the Sholiga, but categories of communities, although they included all those which have been discussed at some length in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In his essay, The Position of Women in Primitive Societies and Our Own, the anthropologist E.Evans-Pritchard declared that in all societies men have been, and are, in the ascendancy. Relations between the sexes being determined by 'imponderables', he claimed, it followed that the issue of the status of women went beyond the scope of sociological analysis and was 'fundamentally a moral question' (Evans-Pritchard,1963, p.54).

Whether moral, sociological or both the subject has been a controversial one for a long time. Unconformist thinkers, from Aristophanes to Mary Wollstonecraft to Simone de Beauvoir have through the centuries brought it to the attention of their respective compatriots, albeit without achieving much alteration in the status quo, at least in their day. It is only recently that the trickle of debate and protest has become a flood and made the literate world aware that the issue(which Evans-Pritchard considered so unimportant that for years he thought his paper did not warrant publication) was not going to go away.

Although the evolutionary theories of the earlier nineteenth-century anthropologists such as Morgan and McLennan, which envisaged a progression of stages from Matriarchy to Patriarchy have been largely discredited, it does seem to have been established that the more technologically 'primitive' a society is the more egalitarian its structure tends to be. Why this is so is a matter of opinion. According to Engels the inferior status of women is due to their rôle in production and is exemplified in the family rôle, in which the wife plays the proletariat to the husband's bourgeosie. The emancipation of women, he wrote, was primarily dependent on the re-introduction of

the whole female sex into the public industries.

> 'To accomplish this the monogamous family must cease to be the industrial unit of society....Monogamy rose through the concentration of...wealth in one hand - a man's hand - and from the endeavour to bequeath this wealth to the children of this man to the exclusion of all others. ....With the transformation of the means of production into collective property the monogamous family ceases to be the economic unit of society' (Engels, 1902,pp.90-92).

Karen Sacks is not convinced by Engel's theory that male property ownership is the basis for male supremacy in class societies.

> 'It seems likely that in class societies the subordinate position of women derives not from domestic property relations but from something outside the household that denies women adult social status' (Sacks, 1979, p.221)

This 'something', she suggests, was the preference for men in production by the ruling classes because of their greater mobility and freedom from the need of time off in which to rear children. A system of differential worth was thus established. 'In return for the loss of economic autonomy(the ruling classes) conferred on man exclusive social adulthood and guardianship of women' (Sacks op. cit. p. 222). Once women had been established as domestic wards they were easily exploitable as cheap labour under industrial capitalism. Thus for Sacks the concept of social adulthood is the key aspect of the question of women's status. She believes that this condition can only be acquired through equal participation in social production.

Kathleen Gough argues that women have greater power and independence in hunter-gatherer societies because they are important food providers. She reminds us that these societies lack the kind of male possessiveness which leads to the ideas of male honour and female shame concern-

concerning virginity, divorce, remarriage and adultery. She agrees with Engels that the power of men to exploit others, especially women, arose with the amassing of surplus wealth and the rise of the state, but does not think that there are 'class' divisions between the sexes in 'primitive' societies, although they do mostly live- contrary to what Engels believed - in nuclear families (Gough, 1971).

If Marxist theorists are at variance as to the provenance of Woman's Place, the 'biological differences' theory which seeks to explain male predominance in terms of their innate ability to undertake tasks more efficiently than females are able to do, also fails to convince when it is remembered - as Margaret Meade (1949) and William Goode (1964) have pointed out-that while what are regarded as male and female tasks vary from culture to culture (in any given culture), it is the male tasks which are given the highest value. Thus where women hoe and men weave weaving is regarded as the more difficult, demanding and important task. But where men hoe and women weave women are regarded as only fit for weaving since hoeing is 'man's work'. Paula England suggests that in the modern sector the prestige of an occupation remains the same whether men or women are mostly in it, (e.g. teaching, surgery), but where men and women are in face-to-face work-contact equality seldom exists. Doctors and pilots are predominantly male, nurses and air-hostesses predominantly female. This is of course a question of the continuity and survival of customary behaviour rooted in the past the effect of which can be seen in what Colette Dowling calls women's 'hidden fear of independence' (Dowling 1981), so that they tend to choose, or let their parents choose for them, to be trained for the less responsible jobs or what are regarded as such in their own societies.

Veronica Beechey suggests that the theory of biological differences is less significant than the different

forms of social construction of gender and the forms of social institution in which patriarchy exists in different societies. 'Different forms of domination can be expected to be experienced by women in different social institutions' (Beechey, 1979). While this appears to be true enough it is hardly explanatory, except in terms of a plea for accuracy on the part of Marxist feminists. Maureen McIntosh's historical exposition fails likewise as a satisfactory exegesis when she writes,

> 'It is not the 'domestic community' which has existed from pre-history, but female subordination. Control of women's fertility and sexuality, labour and progeny has always been sought by dominant groups and classes as one means of control of reproduction of the social system.' (McIntosh, 1977,pp126-127)

The trouble with this rendering is that we really don't know what went on in pre-history, and when it comes to seeking parallels in present or recent 'primitive' societies we frequently find more sex egalitarianism among these people than is found in any of the more complex societies. Evidence for the subordination of females is also lacking for the first civilisations. Perhaps it was associated with the rise of the nation state, although this theory is hardly a definitive one either. Judith Brown, among others, postulates their responsibility for child care as the limiting factor for women. They are capable of doing any work that men can do as long as there is someone else around to look after the children (Brown, 1970). This is a common-sense proposal and one which Srinivas also implied when he said that professional women in India with children were in a better position to carry on with their careers than Western women because they had joint families or servants to care for their children (Srinivas, 1975). But the ethnographic facts, in Chamarajanagar at least, do not support it. There the women in the best position to leave their children in the care of others are

the high caste wives living in orthodox joint families where the children all play and are fed together, cared for by affines and servants, yet these tend to be also the most restricted of all Chamarajanagar women. Clearly intervening factors have to be distinguished to clarify Brown's submission.

Sherry Ortner sees women's generally inferior status as due to a world-wide assumption (among men at least) that women are more closely associated with 'nature' because of their reproductive functions, while men are associated with 'culture'. Since 'culture' seems to have been universally regarded, at least in the past, as transcending 'nature' this accounts for women's lower position perceptually (Ortner, 1974). Ortner's position resembles, up to a point, that of Edwin Ardener, who also sees the problem in terms of the nature/culture dichotomy. However he regards the dichotomy as a matter of the perceptions of both sexes. Parts of female experience may seem 'wild' and threatening to men just as parts of male experience (e.g., war) may seem 'wild' and threatening to women. He suggests that the one-sided view of the male as representing 'culture' is simply due to the fact that anthropologists have been, at least until recently, either men or women trained to think like men (Ardener, 1972). This way of looking at the question as one of two co-existent conceptual systems, the oft-stated male and the until recently unstated female, is an interesting exercise in lateral thinking which is upheld by the way some Chamarajanagar women, not restricted to any one community, seem to envisage the relationship between the sexes. As they saw it men were permanently prone to fall into evil ways unless guided or controlled by good women. I will come back to these attitudes later. Their relevance here is the way they confirm Ardener's view that the nature/culture archetype is not the sole prerogative of the male sex.

Turning from perception to practicalities, a United Nations report published in 1980 sums up well enough the

situation as it still exists today in spite of a growing chorus of protest. Women, it seems, still constitute half the world's population and perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, while receiving one-tenth of its income and owning less than one hundredth of its property. The situation in India epitomises this state of affairs, contrary to what might be supposed of a nation led by a powerful female prime minister. Robert Cassen observes that the prominence of women in professional and public life may mislead foreigners into thinking that India is unusually liberal in its treatment of women, whereas on the contrary women, apart from the emancipated few, are as oppressed as anywhere in the world (Cassen, 1978).

While it seems that Islam may have been partly instrumental in promoting the institution of purdah ** i.e. veiling and total restriction amounting to immurement in north India, and the role of women in orthodox Muslim communities is probably even more subservient than that of high caste Hindu women, at least in south India, the majority of Indian women are Hindus and, according to A.N. Altekar, it is largely the doctrines of post-Upanishadic Hindu orthodoxy which is responsible for the disabilities endured by them. Historically, he says, the position of Indian women has deteriorated steadily since the virtual equality they enjoyed in the Vedic age, and has only begun to improve with the advent of modernisation in the past century (Altekar, 1956). Certainly, whatever their position was earlier, the laws of the Brahman Manu, who lived sometime between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., not only forbade to women the study of the Vedas but condemned them to perpetual tutelage, first under the father, then the husband, then the son.

** But see D. Jacobson in Jacobson & Wadley, 1977, who suggests that the institution of purdah in India has ancient Hindu as well as Islamic origins.

The attitudes exemplified by these laws persist even today. The high caste wife in an orthodox household is more or less immured, depending on the orthodoxy of the household head, and, even in south India, is expect- to regard her husband as a god, cannot address him by name, uses the honorific plural in speech to him (while he addresses her in the singular reserved for inferiors), and cannot eat before he does so that if he comes home late she must remain hungry. In the past her position as an inauspicious widow, shaven-headed and shunned, could only be avoided by pre-deceasing her spouse, for which every pious woman was supposed to pray, or being burned alive on his funeral pyre. (Among the low castes, by contrast, widows may and often do remarry).

This scripture-ordained harshness has been echoed by the status accorded to women in kinship and marriage regulations, especially in north India and among the high castes, through the idea that they pass as appendages from their father's lineage to that of their husband, so that women's names are not preserved in traditional genealogies. This has affected their right to inheritance. In customary Hindu law women had almost no proprietary rights and where property was left to them by compassionate fathers, husbands or brothers (as happens quite often in the South), it was only for their support in their lifetime. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 was intended to redress these inequities but in most parts of India it is still ignored by the orthodox unless it becomes expedient to pass property to a wife or daughter for fiscal reasons or to get round land-ceiling laws.

All this being said, two riders should be added. Firstly even in north India the position of low caste women, within their own castes, is less restricted, partly at least because they have always had to undertake extra-mural work for wages for the family to survive. As M.N. Srinivas reminds us, the relationship between men and women in the low castes is more egalitarian than in

the high castes, and when lower castes try to achieve upward mobility by 'sanskritisation' one of the consequences is the lowering of the status of women in that caste (Srinivas, 1975). And secondly the situation in the four States of south India appears to have been, and is still, traditionally better for women except in the case of a few high castes. It will be recalled from the introduction to this thesis that Barbara Miller (1981), Tim Dyson and Mick Moore (1983), and the contributors to D.E. Sopher's An Exploration of India (1980) all concluded that the status of women in south India was a good deal better than it is in the North. Among the suggested reasons for this situation was that women may inherit property in the South. Land ownership by either sex is of course a world-wide index of high prestige. See S. Salamon and M. Klein (1979), J. Goody (1976) and E. Boserup (1970). Both Goody and Boserup relate the status of women in different societies to patterns of agricultural development: Animal husbandry and plough cultivation are associated with more male dominance, hoe cultivation with less male dominance. Likewise dry-land and wheat cultivation are associated with 'higher masculinity', while rice and wet-land cultivation go with 'lower masculinity' It is significant that the Sholiga tribe, who traditionally own no cattle and cultivate by hoe, which both sexes use, enjoys a fairly high degree of sex equality. A few high caste women of my acquaintance in Chamarajnagar had inherited property from their fathers or been given some by a brother for their support if and when widowed, but most of the female landowners I came across were low caste women who had either inherited land from a parent (sometimes from a mother or grandmother) or had bought it out of her savings from earned income and was working it herself with the aid of kin or paid employees. In all these cases the husband had no control over the property, all decisions concerning which were recognised as the woman's

personal prerogative. Jack Goody also associates 'diverging devolution', i.e. inheritance by daughters as well as sons, as in Sri Lanka, with intensive cultivation. South Indian low caste societies appear to echo, in varying degrees, the cultural model of Sri Lanka in both production and inheritance (Goody, 1976). One local Harijan female landowner was so rich and paid so well that, as a high caste informant told me in awed tones, "People of any caste will work for her".

Certainly there are many hints of past sex egalitarianism in the history and the kinship systems of south India and Sri Lanka. Basham tells us that women in politics were not unusual in the South and there were cases of queens leading their troops in warfare (cf. Thapar 1966, Basham 1971, Nilakanta Sastri 1958, 1963). Srinivas, writing on the past history of the Coorgs, Dumont on the Kallar, and Yalman on Sri Lanka and south India, all confirm that in these communities there is a tradition that the position of women was much higher and freer in the past before the spread of 'sanskritisation'. It should be noted here, however, that the idea that Brahmans came in person to the South from the North bringing 'sanskritic' ideology with them has been strongly criticised, (see Burton Stein, 1980). Since modern historians now accept that the Brahmans have been in south India as long as anyone else, the depreciation of women in Brahman or 'sanskritic' orthodoxy cannot be said to have originated in the North. The fact that women are more undervalued there than in the South seems to derive from different sources, not just the influence of Islam, which places the North in the 'high masculinity' belt reaching from the Mediterranean through the Middle East and Pakistan.

Whatever the situation regarding women's role may have been in the past a study of the collective representations [concerning women] as expressed by the males of Chamarajanagar reveals that they conflict. High caste male attidues towards the opposite sex are extremely ambivalent, reflecting dual images

in binary opposition: the pure and the impure; the vulnerable and the potent; the auspicious married mother, associated with the sacred cow, and the intrinsically dangerous temptress, threatening a man's ascetic control of his sexuality and thus undermining his spiritual strength. Attached to the theme of temptress are such projections as the notion that women desire sex more than men do and are less capable of controlling their own desire, thus attesting to the necessity for keeping them subservient. In the Sastras, the classical texts, the female is seen on the one hand as the active aspect of spiritual power and on the other as a dependent creature requiring constant supervision to protect her from the consequences of her frailty, which include the dishonour of her male relatives.

Quoting the Tamil proverb, 'Siva without Sakti is a corpse', Susan Wadley writes,

> 'As Sakti, the power or energy of the universe, the goddess provides the motivating force for the passive or inactive male: without the sakti of his goddess no male god can act....The goddess as Sakti, as Devi, as the Amman of south India or as one of her more concrete manifestations, such as Durga, Kali, Parvati or Lakshmi, provides a backdrop that is fundamental to understanding Hindu women.....Women who like the goddesses are feared, must....be kept under male control. Through male control and her own chastity the Hindu woman controls her dangerous sacred powers and is able to use them for the benefit of her family. Further there is strong evidence that the attribution of sacred powers to women derives from the beliefs and practices of the indigenous peoples of India and images of sacred females are prevalent in the earliest Tamil literature' (Wadley, 1980)

Sheryl Daniel shows how this south Indian perception of the sacred power of the female leads to problems with conflicting models in marriage. In the course of the same conversation a man may refer in different contexts to the superiority of the husband, to the superiority of the wife, and to the equality of the sexes (Daniel, 1980). This plurality of attitude is a common feature of south Karnataka cultture too and

perhaps accounts for the idea expressed by many Chamarajanagar wives that men are naturally immoral (a good example of Ardener's premise of two coexistent conceptual systems). A common argument against divorce cited by those high caste women who disapproved of it was that the husband would inevitably go wrong if abandoned by his wife to his own devices. "Men don't have any moral sense", as a Lingayat wife put it. Under the tutelage and good example of the wife a man may improve even if he starts off bad, but he can't keep it up on his own. The idea that it was possible to reform an erring husband was persistent among all but the Westernised high castes. Among the low castes, where divorce is institutionalised, the principal female argument against it was that the second husband was likely to be just as bad as the first.

Apart from a general agreement that, mentally and physically, men are strong and women are weak, the rationalisation of female subordination by Chamarajanagar men followed two lines of argument, the one ritual and the other economic. As with those referring to the caste system, the ritual element stemmed from the higher and the economic from the lower end of the social order. To deal with the ritual theory first, this holds, in brief, that women are more susceptible to pollution than men are. And once defiled, they are less amenable to purification. An orthodox Brahman of Chamarajanagar explained it to me in these terms:

> "The female is like an earthenware pot, which is porous and therefore not easily cleaned. If contaminated the pot must be thrown away. The male, on the other hand, is like a brass pot. If polluted it can be scrubbed and retained."

The symbolism is based on that used in the dharmsastras.

Furthermore, being at risk of impregnation from puberty to menopause, the female must be protected whether or not she wishes to be, and such protection implies control.

Nur Yalman insists that beliefs about the transmission of caste through 'blood' are the chief reasons for the enormous importance attached by high castes to the 'purity' of women. 'The bond between the genitor and the child is tenuous; it can always be denied or.... repudiated by the father. This cannot be done by the mother' (Yalman, 1963). The only way of keeping pure castes pure, the argument runs, is to control the women's freedom. As Jane Schneider says, cultural stress on and ideology of men's 'honour' and women's 'shame' leading to a preoccupation with the virginity of daughters and sisters, 'serves both to define and enhance the patrimonies of families and to define the family as a corporate group' (Schneider, 1971, p.21).

As L. Fruzetti et al. translate south Indian kinship ideology, caste purity is situated in a person's blood. 'Blood' in this sense does not express a straightforward biological quality exactly but combines mythic, symbolic and organic connotations. Condensed 'blood' can become semen in a man and breast milk in a woman. The child is formed from these aspects of condensed 'blood' as well as from the mother's blood directly transferred from the womb. Blood purity can be divided into two aspects, body or matter and spirit or motion, the former being the male aspect of blood and the latter the female. When a woman marries the bodily aspect of her blood becomes identical with that of her husband while the spiritual aspect remains unchanged.

> 'Blood purity shared by all caste members situates a caste in the hierarchy of all castes. The person is created from a particular combination of caste blood purity....within the smallest hierarchical sub-division, the kindred. Since a person's blood purity alters given the way he acts in the world the kindred emerges as that unit of action which guarantees a particular code of conduct....The kindred bounds a particular range of blood purity and provides a mechanism for passing that range of blood purity from both parents to children' (Fruzetti et al., 1976, pp.163-165).

The children of mother's sisters share the spirit or motion aspect of 'blood' and those of father's brothers the bodily aspect. For this reason the marriage of parallel cousins is regarded as incestuous. Cross-cousin and sister's daughter marriage, the preferred forms in south India, provide on the other hand the best possible exchange of blood aspects within the kindred.

In north India, according to Henry Orenstein's interpretation ofthe relevant passages in the dharmasastras, it is also believed that a woman's 'bodily substance', which consists of atom-like particles, becomes transmitted from that of her father's line to that of her husband's in the course of the wedding ceremony, (Orenstein,1970). Both Kenneth David and A.T. Carter claim that in their fieldwork areas this is a recognised concept (David 1973,Orenstein 1973). However, I could not find anybody in Chamarajanagar, from Brahman to scavenger, who had ever heard of it. On being asked people would usually enquire, after a slightly stunned silence, "But how can that be ?" Attempts were made to answer the question helpfully: well, sometimes women put on weight after marriage. A bride's face glows after marriage. (Voice from the back of the group: "So does a bridegroom's"). Most people suggested that the change, if change there were, must be psychological. "She knows that henceforth she must follow her husband and his kin in all things".

Nobody even offered me the south Indian version by which the wife retains the female aspect of her 'blood' in marriage. One supposes that these ideas, embodied as they are in fairly esoteric texts, are not part of the common coinage of Chamarajanagar thought, whatever may be the case with David's Jaffna Tamils or Carter's Maharashtrians. In any case they are subject to differing interpretations.

As S. J. Tambiah says,

> '.....the core of the Indian conception of the joint family, as first embedded in the classical Dharmasatric law texts, then later interpreted by modern Hindu law, focuses on relations between persons in terms of their interests in property....'(Tambiah and Goody,1973,p.75).

Viewed in these terms the following passage, 'A maiden becomes one with her husband in Pinda and gotra and is detached from the gotra of her father at the seventh step', could mean that after the seven steps the bridal pair take round the holy fire during the marriage rites the bride is no longer entitled to maintenance by her father and his agnates since this duty now devolves on her husband and his agnates. One educated Chamarajanagar Brahman whose opinion I canvassed on the subject protested that the change of 'bodily substance' credo was irreconciliable with the close ties a woman retains with her parents and siblings in south India. As the widowed father of four beloved daughters his common-sense objection highlights a conflict of values which, if not explicitly recognised, is very noticeable among the higher castes in Chamarajanagar. There is a strong sentiment that when the loved and petted daughters marry their love for members of their natal household should remain unimpaired, as does the natal household's love for them. This was often put to me as a justification for genealogical cross-cousin or avuncular marriage. At the same time a wife is expected, at least in theory and by her mother-in-law, to adapt totally to her husband's family and to transfer her affection to it. Close cross-cousin and avuncular marriage, where interaction between the bride's and groom's households is generally continuous, resolves this paradoxical conflict and provides a solution to the puzzle.

Among the low castes the economic rationalisation is paramount. Women are not depreciated for any of the reasons given above or on account of the fact that they are

forbidden to perform rites ensuring the salvation of the father. They do perform rites in the context of the general well-being and productivity of family unit and village, and in any case sons are not obliged to speed the deceased father's soul on its transmigratory way among groups which do not adhere to the doctrine of reincarnation. Judging by the comments of low caste informants women in these castes are underrated simply because they do not earn as much as men do. And the reason why they do not earn so much is said to be because they are physically weaker. The fact that they work much longer hours than do the men because of their domestic role is regarded as irrelevant. There is also the fact that after marriage a woman's earning power is lost to her natal household and the same applies, in theory, to her ability to support her parents in old age. However, this disadvantage can be got round in these castes by the Southern institution of the uxorilocal son-in-law.

Among the higher castes, whose women do not earn if the household is 'sanskritised', the economic argument is different: the terrifying cost of a daughter's wedding if the father is to hold up his head in society is usually cited. There is also the question of dowry, although this is not very important in Chamarajanagar since only a few castes apart from the Brahmans practise this mainly north Indian institution. With most of the local jati it is a case of an almost equal exchange of prestations. But elsewhere in the country, with the advent in recent years of increasing numbers of prospective bridegrooms with the kind of foreign professional qualifications which lead to good jobs in an era of unemployment it has given rise to gross misuse of the institution, appallingly cruel exploitation of young brides, and increasingly stringent Government legislation against the practice.

In Chamarajanagar the position of women is at once a function of class and of caste culture. Among the

low castes, and even more so among the Sholigas, where the division of labour among the sexes is not clearly distinguished, their relative independence within the family unit is manifest. Their exploitation comes as much from the castes above them as from the men of their own castes. It is true that the low caste women are frequently overworked or forced into unwanted pregnancies by uncaring husbands who may beat them if they do not submit, but a low caste woman can always divorce her husband or just go home to her relations as long as she has any. The eldest daughter of my low caste neighbour was married to her mother's brother's son. When this youth and his mother beat her for non-cooperation she walked out and walked home to Somavarapet. Her parents took her in and arranged for a divorce. She subsequently made a love-marriage to an unrelated man of her own jati and is now happily settled. Occasionally the beating situation is even reversed. One respondent divulged that he had divorced his first wife because she set about his father with a broom. And it would have to be a sturdy husband who would risk direct confrontation with a militant Upuliga wife. As one of the plantation staff remarked to me after describing an Upuliga family fracas, "They seem to spend all their spare time beating their husbands".

Nevertheless there is a general assumption among these unsanskritised jati too (with the possible exception of the Sholiga among whom the existence of dual conceptual universes is at once clear, in that the women tend to have a strong notion of their importance in the tribal schema, and blurred in that sex roles are relatively undifferentiated), that women's affairs, including their work, are less important than those of men. An illustration of this occurred many years ago when my mother changed the order in which

the bags of coffee beans were weighed in the evening during the crop picking season. Finding that the women had to wait until all the men's bags were weighed before going home and starting to cook the evening meal, she ruled that the women's should be weighed first. This nearly brought about a strike of male labourers until she pointed out that under the new dispensation they would get their evening meal much earlier. Impressed by this logic the men complied without more ado. But when I returned to the estate two decades after my parents had departed the status quo had been restored.

Among the vast group of Gowda (farmer) communities in the middle of the caste hierarchy where women may work, or at least superintend, on the family land, though not for wages, they still have a certain amount of freedom and responsibility within the limits of the farm. These groups also welcome daughters, as do those in the jati below them, even though they may be better pleased by the birth of sons. At the highest end of the scale there is the small but growing group of semi-Westernised or 'modernised' new élite, mostly from high or fairly high castes, who have abandoned 'sanskritic' or orthodox ideals. In general the more sophisticated a family is, the more the principle - though not necessarily the practice - of the rights of women is tacitly recognised. Though the Chamarajanagar new élite are small provincials by the standards of the top class stratum of Mysore or Bangalore, they model themselves on the more 'liberal' city 'gentry', but only up to the point where the activities of their wives and daughters are limited by Chamarajanagar notions of respectability.

Apart from the new élite the position of women among the numerous orthodox and sanskritised high caste communities in the taluk is manifestly inferior. Here they are mostly restricted to the house after puberty

unless closely chaperoned by a male relative. They do not even go shopping. All visits to the bazaar are undertaken by servants, children or male household members. They remain subordinate until - and unless - the birth of sons eventually brings them daughters-in-law and grandchildren, when if they are lucky they may achieve the state of family matriarch whose word is law. The first love and loyalty of orthodox Hindu males is to their mothers, who in return spoil their sons outrageously when they are young, although the nature of the bond changes as the men grow up, the mothers becoming at once more dependent on them and more demanding. The system of early marriage helps to sustain the traditional image of the woman's role, and it seems to be partly responsible for the low level of education even among women in households where the men are comparatively well educated. The idea that there is no point in educating girls "because they will only get married" dies hard among these communities. Where they are educated at all above secondary school the tendency is to let them stay on at college while a husband is sought for them, but once an offer has been made and accepted by the family match-makers she is committed to domesticity. "How can she go on with her studies ?" asked the brother of a bright college girl in answer to the suggestion that she might complete her education after the marriage arranged for when she was eighteen. "Her mother-in-law wouldn't like it, and she'll have to do housework for her husband's family". For another girl, also high caste and with more or less the same economic background but coming from and marrying into families with more 'modern' views, the solution was the completion of her Mysore University degree by correspondence course. She had married a young man whose sister had married one of her elder brothers. These 'exchange' marriages are considered in Chamarajanagar to redound very much to the advantage of the brides since

each one is in a sense a hostage for the other and can thus expect a good deal of leniency. A third girl from the same social background whose father was a liberal Chamarajanagar Brahman, was able to take a first and a higher degree in Mysore and to work at a job for two or three years before marrying. She was the only daughter of a widower and ruled him with affectionate firmness.

One of the arguments against higher education cited by Chamarajanagar worthies of the orthodox persuasion is that it raises the age of marriage and thus extends the dangerous period between puberty and marriage when the purity of girls is at risk. Although the segregation of the sexes is not observed in the South to anything like the lengths to which it is carried in north India, one of the often reiterated excuses advanced in Chamarajanagar for not sending girls to school or college or allowing them to have jobs is the danger of their coming into social contact with strange males. As Ursula Sharma points out, the whole ideology of female purity and female sexual frailty, necessitating female modesty, makes it difficult for women, even when they have acquired qualifications, to get jobs, on account of this prejudice against their meeting men. Because of this segregation, she says, it is difficult for women to achieve solidarity (Sharma, 1978). Female solidarity in Chamarajanagar is in fact more noticeable among the low castes, where women get about outside the household and work in gumpu or gangs, usually organised by a woman.

A further argument put forward against educating women is that the higher the education of a woman the more difficult it is to find a husband whose educational status is equal to hers, or preferably higher still. In the course of conversation an orthodox high caste man protested to me that if women were educated

to the same standard as men or allowed too much freedom the result would be deleterious to the dignity of their husbands. Asked whether he thought the role of Western husbands with emancipated wives was an undignified one he thought it over and replied with a worried expression, "No, but you see it is not the same. Our wives have to worship us as gods. How can they do that if they have equality ?" A good question which epitomises what seems to be a deep-seated fear not confined to Hindu India that the emancipation of women implies in the loss of masculine superiority a further loss of masculine identity.

In fact, one of the difficulties encountered by emancipated working women in India is that many men resent their independence and tend to look on them as 'fair game' on the grounds that they have asked for trouble by rejecting the 'modesty' traditionally expected of respectable high caste females. Urban women travelling to work alone in crowded buses and trains frequently have to put up with pinching and pestering which they may not be eqipped to deal with.

The Education Commission (1964-1966) reported that one of the most encouraging aspects of life in modern India has been the development of education for women, in view of the fact that at the beginning of the 19th century there was virtually no provision at all in the country for the formal education of girls. Nevertheless the all-India literacy rate revealed by the 1971 census was 18.7 for women compared to 39.5 for men. That there are only 246 female graduates to every 1000 male graduates seems a great waste of the country's resources. There are still just about 474 literate women to every 1000 literate men, and of these so-called literate females about 40% are only semi-literate in that they have not obtained any further schooling after achieving basic literacy. Worse still, the education ratio is declining. The quinquennial growth rate in enrolment of girls in primary schools dropped from 56% in 1966 to 30.7% in 1971, and in secondary schools from

70.6% in 1966 to 30.5% in 1971 (1971 census figures). These statistics have been accompanied by a corresponding drop in the number of female graduates.

The figures for the economic participation of women in India tell the same story. Meher Master shows that the growth of industry and the development of modern technology, along with the decline in cottage and handicraft industries, has led to a corresponding decline in the employment of women outside the home, since the new jobs have become male preserves (Master, 1980). Her findings are confirmed by the report of the Indian Council for Social Science Research on the status of women in India (ICSSR 1975). Women's economic participation, the authors claim, has been declining during the past half century. For instance, the percentage of women workers in the total female population decreased from 41.8 million in 1911 to 31.2 million in 1971, and this decline is speeding up. Asked whether they approved of educating women, many of the Chamarajanagar male informants answered "No" on the grounds that educated and/or technically skilled women would take jobs away from men. As unemployment grows this attitude seems to be spreading and hardening.

It is true that there are now more service and professional jobs for women than in the past. But Ashok Mitra reminds us that the participation sex ratio of female workers per 10,000 males has only improved between 1966 and 1971 in one category, that of artists, writers, nurses, teachers and technicians, with the great concentrations remaining in the medical and teaching professions so commonly regarded as 'suitable' for women (Mitra 1980). Work in offices, banks and shops, where they come into contact with strange males, is not considered suitable by parents and husbands.

In rural India the great majority of women workers for wages are agricultural labourers, mostly outrageously exploited in that they are paid half the male wage for equal work. Manual work is of course the least prestigous for both sexes, but even here there has been a decline

in female labour force participation. The all-India sex ratio of women per 10,000 men among semi-skilled and unskilled workers dropped from 3,436 in 1961 to 1,988 in 1971. As for the crafts and cottage industries, once the great preserve of women workers, in Karnataka alone the ratio of women per 100 men in the crafts dropped from 140 in 1961 to 63 in 1971 (Mitra, op cit., 1980).

'Throughout the underdeveloped world' Mitra reminds us:

> 'a certain degradation and obsolescence of skills hitherto wielded by women, accompanied by a decline in overall employment as of employment in sectors of increasing productivity in the informal sectors of economies, goes on apace.'

In the Third World today, he adds, a kind of general witch-hunt of women is taking place, manifesting itself in declining proportions of women to men, higher mortality and worse health: 'Slow, unobtrusive, physical decimation but rapid, noticeable declines in work participation and terms and conditions of work' (Mitra, op.cit., p.45).

This frightening picture is not alleviated by the fact that the enormous contribution of Indian women in housework is totally ignored by economists. In the 1971 census 73% of rural women and 75% of urban women aged 15 to 59 gave housework as their chief activity. In India, where fuel and water has so often to be gathered and carried, and where food grains and most other foodstuffs have to be processed in the home from their original state, housework is no sinecure.

The sex ratio in Chamarajanagar taluk follows the general Indian trend, in that there were nearly 6000 more males than females enumerated in 1971. As elsewhere, more boys than girls are born in India, but unlike the situation in the West more girls than boys die. The sex ratio figures for all India rose from

102 in 1901 to 106 in 1961 to 107 in 1971. (In Karnataka it remained unchanged at 104 between 1961 and 1971). The life-expectancy gap between the sexes is still increasing, which strongly suggests that the traditional devaluation of women in India, albeit less evident in the South, is an enduring phenomenon which new legislation and changing standards have not succeeded in eradicating.

However, to conclude on a more optimistic note, M.N. Srinivas was able to point out only six years ago that 'the career woman in India is very visible, and it is significant that society at large has quietly accepted women's assumption of new roles.' He rightly adds that an essential pre-condition to the achievement of these roles is migration to the cities, although of course urbanisation must go hand in hand with education. These prerequisites having been established Indian women wishing to enter business, professional or public life have, he reminds us, certain advantages over their Western sisters on account of their wide kin networks and the availability of servants. All that is necessary for them is to make 'a successful transition from one structural and cognitive frame of reference to another' (Srinivas, 1977).

But not all women in India want to have jobs. The necessity for women to work outside the home at all, unless in a highly prestigious profession, is still avoided by the majority with traditional values. And at least, as D. Jacobsen reminds us, Indian women grow in status as they get older and are not relegated to old people's homes, even as widows. On the whole, she believes Indian women are reasonably fulfilled in their lives (Jacobsen, 1977). Patricia Jeffery too found that many of the women in purdah she studied were not unhappy about their condition but felt that they were safe and protected (Jeffery, 1979). Some restricted wives in Chamarajanagar said pragmatically that there were advantages in being subordinated and relegated to the home. Men, they argued, paid for their claim to

superiority by having to shoulder the responsibility of breadwinning. Writing on Western discrimination against women in the professions, M. Paloma alludes to the fact that most women are tolerant of domestication and that on the whole even successful career women prefer to combine their careers with marriage and at least some housework (Paloma and Garland, 1971). The trouble is, as Mitra emphasises, the work women do in the domestic sphere is so taken for granted by men that it is virtually invisible. Only if it suddenly stopped, as in some sort of fabulous general strike, no doubt the stuff of fantasy, would the contribution of countless woman-hours be painfully recognised.

Perhaps the sturdy common sense of Gayle Rubin should be allowed the last word in this chapter.

> 'Men and women are,of course, different. But they are not as different as day and night, earth and sky, yin and yang, life and death. In fact from the standpoint of nature, men and women are closer to each other than either is to anything else.. ...Furthermore, although there is an average difference between males and females in a variety of traits, the range of variation of these traits shows considerable overlap'. (Rubin, 1975, p.179).

CHAPTER IV

KINSHIP

The subject of kinship in India is wide, intricate, and, in the case of south Indian kinship, chronically controversial. Since the purpose of this chapter is merely to provide a modicum of theoretical background to the possible effects of the most commonly found version of south Indian kinship on fertility and on the status of women, a greatly simplified précis of the situation as both terminologically and behaviourally defined is all that will be attempted here.

On the substantive plane the position is this: though various jati differ somewhat in their interpretation of the laws of Manu and the mediaeval Mitakshara marriage law, among north Indian Hindus marriage with close kin is forbidden and all cousins are classed terminologically with siblings, marriage between them thus being regarded as incestuous. According to Manu marriage is prohibited between sapinda category of kin (those cognatic relatives who share pinda or rice balls at funerary ceremonies), and between those related within seven generations on the husband's side and five on the wife's side. This very wide prohibition is not strictly adhered to by all communities, but in general in north Indian systems affines are widely dispersed geographically as well as genealogically and outsiders are incorporated as spouses.

Furthermore marriage among the higher castes in north India is ideally hypergamous (the wife marrying 'up'), sometimes even across caste or sub-caste boundaries. This ideology stems from the Hindu principle of kanya dan, the gift of a virgin. Dan, from the Sanskrit dena to give, means a gift to a Brahman which can never be repaid as that which the donor receives in return is merit. The gift of a virgin girl (along with her dowry, the wedding expenses,

and such hospitality as may at any time in her life be required by the groom's family) absolves her father of the sin of begetting her as long as no reciprocity is involved. Since the bride-takers symbolise Brahmans they are regarded as perpetually superior to the bride-givers even when the marriage is between peers. No bride-taker would ever willingly give a bride to a group which has previously been its bride-giver, as to do so would be to reverse their status positions. Although factual as opposed to notional hypergamy may be practised, parents are always seeking to marry their daughters into families whose ritual, economic and cultural status is higher than their own, most marriages take place within the regional sub-caste, albeit outside the immediate villages or localities concerned. They tend to form their own levels or cycles of hypergamy, A giving to B, B to C and -eventually - C to A. Where C has to give to A, C is perpetually inferior to A while superior to B, as B is superior to A.

In south India, by contrast (the chief exception being the hierarchically ordered Nayar caste of Kerala), marriage is isogamous. It has to be, since marriage to bilateral cross-cousins, and commonly the elder sister's daughter, is terminologically (though in no other way) prescribed and is in fact very prevalent in the South. This is the case even among Brahmans. In a patrilineal system the giving of a bride to a household from which a bride has been accepted in a previous generation is inevitable in the case of a man's marriage to his father's sisters' daughter or elder sister's daughter. And in another popular south Indian marriage arrangement, when a sister and brother from one household marry a brother and sister from another, the reciprocal giving and taking occurs in the same generation.

In the South, then, isogamous marriage and reciprocity go hand in hand. When high caste friends in Chamarajanagar were asked how they reconciled this with

the principle of kanya dan they were puzzled. "We give a virgin to them and they give a virgin to us. What's wrong with that ?". The tradition that the intangibles of merit and prestige are the only possible return for a gift to a ritual superior seems to have no application in this part of the country.

Claude Levi-Strauss has postulated three elementary structures of prescriptive kinship and marriage which he envisages in terms of the exchange of women between patrilineages: bilateral cross-cousin marriage, patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (to the father's sister's daughter), and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (to the mother's brother's daughter). Along with a number of other distinguished commentators on the subject he seems at times to confuse the theoretical model with everyday behaviour. (Levi-Strauss 1969). In fact it is the terminology alone which is prescriptive. Louis Dumont, perhaps the best known and most prolific analyst of the theoretical implications of the Dravidian kinship system, was the originator of the Alliance theory, which seeks to identify the structural principle of the system as that of a diachronic affinal alliance between intermarrying patrilineal groups. He follows Levi-Strauss in appearing to regard matrilateral cross-cousin marriage as the form most commonly found in south India. This may have been because the Pramallai Kallar, the jati he studied in Tamilnadu, have a matrilateral preference so strong as to be more or less institutionalised (Dumont, 1950,1953a, 1953b 1957a 1957b, 1961,1964). But the statistical investigation undertaken by Brenda Beck, based on the data of four field anthropologists who had studied south Indian societies, showed that it is not matrilateral cross-cousin marriage but the avuncular form, marriage to the elder sister's daughter, which is the most frequently practised type of kin marriage in south India (Beck,1972). Beck's data is supported by that

of Anthony Good (Good,1980) and the Chamarajanagar evidence.

Dumont argues that where unilineal descent groups are found a strong preference for either matrilateral or patrilateral marriage is also found. (Dumont,op.cit. 1957). Beck and William McCormick both state that all castes in their areas of south India (regions of Tamilnadu and Karnataka respectively), actually marry impartially both types of cross-cousin and the elder sister's daughter in spite of alleged preferences. This is also the case in Chamarajanagar. Here members of 22 important local jati were questioned as to marriage preferences. Fifty per cent expressed an equal preference for both types of cross-cousin marriage, followed by avuncular marriage. Eighteen per cent bracketed equal all the three types of kin marriage sanctioned by the system. Eighteen per cent preferred the avuncular form and 9% preferred marriage with the father's sister's daughter. These figures refer to expressed preferences only. The results of a door-to-door census undertaken in the course of my previous fieldwork revealed statistical evidence of a substantive bias towards the avuncular form, as found by both Beck and Good. Of a sample of 385 couples, 59.5% reported bere kade marriages, literally to 'outside' or unrelated people, while 40.5% were married to kin. Of the whole sample, 19% of the husbands had married a sister's daughter, genealogical or classificatory, 12% had married a mother's brother's daughter, genealogical or classificatory, and 8% had married father's sister's daughter, genealogical or classificatory. The data appear to reveal that while people are prepared to admit to a preference for cross-cousin marriage they have reservations about admitting to one for the avuncular form, although in practice it turns out to be, as Beck and Good have shown, the most frequently practised in south India.

Edmund Leach has pointed out that where sister's daughter marriage is carried out between the same two groups over three or more generations the sister's child

and the mother's brother's child will be one and the same person, and avuncular marriage becomes matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (Leach,1960,1971). Anthony Good found some cases of this situation in Tamilnadu and genealogies revealed the same phenomena in Chamarajanagar. But since people in the areas where sister's daughter marriage is common use the same term, (Sose in Chamarajanagar) in reference to either female cross cousin or the elder sister's daughter, this poses no problem. Terminologically, the girl is still 'potential wife' or 'potential daughter-in-law'.

Various reasons were given by Chamarajanagar informants for their reservations about avuncular marriage. Some referred to the possibility of adverse genetic effects, their doubts often expressed in the form of anxious questions such as "Do you think this kind of union produces mad children ?" Others said that marrying the genealogical sister's daughter was too much like marrying one's own sister. (Although the terminology does not differentiate in general between genealogical and classificatory kin, people who wish to clarify the situation do so without difficulty by referring to genealogical kin as sothera or uterine. (Thus akka = elder sister while sothera akka = one's own or uterine elder sister). One informant said bitterly that though his community preferred kin marriages he personally thought the bride should come from afar as she might then settle down in her husband's household and not keep running back to her parents' home to complain about her treatment. A Brahman astrologer cited to me the laws of Manu and the Mitakshara marriage law as proof that marriage to kin was both sinful and unlucky. He also quoted some relatively modern genetic theory to prove his point. However it turned out that he had married his father's

sister's daughter, his daughter had married her mother's younger brother and his brother had married his sister's daughter.

But the majority of Chamarajanagar informants approved strongly of marriage to kin. One reason was that both spouses are known to both families, who have had the opportunity of observing their characters from babyhood. Another, constantly and rather optimistically cited reason was that "the affection is already there". Others stressed the economic advantages, allowing family resources to be concentrated within the small circle of cognatic kin. (Patricia Jeffery discusses similar rationalisations cited by the Muslim families of her Delhi study [Jeffery 1979]). On the other hand one informant claimed that marriage to kin served a useful purpose in keeping families <u>without</u> property together. And time and time again informants gave as their primary reasons for approving of such unions, "We know our daughters will be happy". The girls remain with the cognatic family and are not lost. The marriages renew the affectionate ties between sisters and brothers, ties which are much valued in south India. Furthermore, when a sister's daughter marries into a joint household the fact that her mother-in-law is also her maternal grandmother ensures that she will be loved and protected. Another advantage, not mentioned by Chamarajanagar advocates of the system but commendable both from the viewpoint of wives, actual and potential, and of those interested in the reduction of fertility in India, is that the bride does not have to 'prove herself' by bearing many children. As Dyson and Moore point out: '...there is less need to repress and resocialise females in their affinal home' (Dyson and Moore, 1983, p.8). Girls married to kin are surrounded by known people and are seldom either lonely or isolated, while social interaction with their natal kin does not cease, since the marriages are so often arranged to reinforce existing affective ties.

Apart from the authorities already cited, analysts of the south Indian kinship system include L.H. Morgan (1871), A.M. Hocart (1927), N. Yalman (1962,1969), I. Karve (1965), D. Maybury-Lewis (1965), G. Obeyesekere (1965), S.J. Tambiah (1965), P.G. Riviere (1966), J.C. Lave (1966), and A.T. Carter (1973). Much of the discussion has turned on whether the system can rightfully be described as prescriptive or preferential and what kind of 'exchange' (of women) is involved in the structural sense.

A brief exposition of the 'Dravidian' kinship terminology may be appropriate here, if only to serve as a basis for the argument that the form most commonly found in the South is apparently less symmetrical than that usually dealt with in the literature unless the system is deemed, as Good suggests (see below), to classify cross-relatives in terms of relative age rather than of generation.

The symmetrical pattern of the terminology is consistent with the practice of marriage with both kinds of cross-cousin, the children of the father's sisters and the mother's brothers, terminologically defined as potential spouses for 'Ego', along with the prohibition of marriage to parallel cousins, children of mother's sisters and father's brothers, terminologically defined as siblings to 'Ego'.

The terminology stresses both the equivalence and the polarity of male and female siblings. Brothers and sisters use the same term for each other's spouse's relatives as they use for their own spouse's relatives. This equivalence creates a wide lateral classificatory extension of the kinship system. For instance, father's sister, mother's brother's wife, and mother's brother's wife's sister are all equated, and the term also implies mother-in-law. The husbands of these women are equated with the mother's brother, and his wife with mother. The equivalence

of spouses is also stressed by the terminology. A woman calls her husband's kin by the terms she has already used before marriage, that is, the 'opposite' to those he uses. Thus affines are equated with non-lineal cognates and there are no separate terms for affines.

Iravati Karve has suggested that the single most important principle of the system is that of relative age (op.cit., 1965). Since brothers, sisters, and male and female cross-cousins are referred to by different terms depending on whether they are older or younger than Ego, there are eight terms used for members of Ego's own generation. In the first ascending generation, that of Ego's parents, there are only four terms, although elder and younger same-sex siblings of mother and father are distinguished by terms denoting 'big' and 'little'. Thus in Kannada mother is Amma and father is Appa. Mother's elder sister is Dod (big) Amma and her younger sister is Chik (little) Amma, while father's elder brother is Dod Appa and the younger brother is Chik Appa. The terms for mother's brother and father's sister are Mama and Atte respectively, which are also used for father-in-law and mother-in-law.

This symmetry is partly over- ridden by terminological deviations revealing that the prescription for cross-cousin marriage includes marriage with the elder sister's daughter. (Marriage with the younger sister's daughter is not countenanced). But since communities in south India which allow sister's daughter marriage and incorporate it into their terminology are far more common than those which do not it has been proposed by Anthony Good (Good, 1980), that the terminologies of the latter could be a derivative of the former rather than vice versa as hitherto held by anthropologists.

The principle of relative age pervades the whole south Indian kinship universe and is symbolised by the deference shown not only by children to parents but also by younger to older siblings. The younger addresses the elder by the kinship term alone while the elder addresses the younger by name. Iravati Karve's contention that the main principle of kinship organisation among 'Dravidian' peoples is the way in which all relatives are arranged according to whether they are older or younger than Ego supports Good's argument that:

> 'the terminology in local use tends to classify cross-relatives according to relative age rather than relative generation.' (Good,1980,p.474)

It is also borne out to some extent by the facts in Chamarajanagar. For instance Karve states that a girl must marry a person belonging to a group older than herself but younger than her parents; so she can marry a younger brother of her mother or any older cross-cousins. This seems to be the way people perceive the system in our area. In Western terms what it amounts to is that older siblings constitute a kind of 'mezzanine floor' between generation levels, which makes structural sense in the case of avuncular marriage, for a man only marries his elder sister's daughter, which makes this girl a kind of categorical cross-cousin. Or, as Good put it: 'From the male viewpoint, there is symmetric prescriptive marriage with a junior cross-relative' (Good,1980,p.494).

For example in Chamarajanagar the term Sose is applied in reference not only to the mother's brother's daughter, the father's sister's daughter, wife's sister and brother's wife, but also to the sister's daughter as potential wife. Referring to the adjacent descending generation, Sose also means sister's daughter (male speaking), and son's wife. The question of relative age is most important when it applies to the correct age differential between husband and wife, since if she were older

than he was he would have to treat her with the respect due to an elder and could not use her name. In Chamarajanagar it is considered desirable that a husband be no more than ten years and no less than four years older than his wife. Six to eight years is regarded as absolutely right. A husband may belong to what in Western perception constitutes a generation below that of his wife and nobody will think anything of it as long as their relative age is categorically correct.

Unless there is actual hostility between the individuals concerned the preferred usage in Chamarajanagar is to employ the closest of two possible kinship terms. Thus, in the case of marriage to the genealogical or classificatory sister's daughter the wife will call her mother-in-law Ajji (grandmother) rather than Atte(father's sister, mother's brother's wife, or mother-in-law) and her husband will continue to call his mother-in-law Akka (elder sister) rather than Atte. He will also call his father-in-law, his sister's husband, Bhava (brother-in-law) rather than Mama, (mother's brother, father's sister's husband or father-in-law).

W. McCormack sees one of the major functions served by cross-cousin and avuncular marriage as a means of preserving the bonds of co-operation and friendship which are founded on the affection of brother and sister.

> ' Brother and sister ties are maintained by festival visits, gifts and mutual assistance, and by marriage. Their children....are expected to preserve this atmosphere of ritual affection among themselves....A brother and his sister participate in the choosing of spouses for each other's children, so that the event involves co-operation and reunion among themselves. The brother-sister relationship is more particularly renewed and intensified if the brother is himself marrying his sister's daughter or if the marriage is between the children of brother and sister.' (McCormack op.cit.. p.45).

The passage above sums up well the emotional value placed on kin marriage in Chamarajanagar. Further

justifications given of cross-cousin and sister's daughter marriage were that family peace, unity and co-operation were enhanced, that wedding gifts were not haggled over, that dowry and bridewealth obligations - in the jati where they exist - could be waived and that horoscopes - in the case of the higher castes which use them - were not usually necessary as the boy and girl were regarded as "made for each other".

In view of the general approval of marriage within the cognatic group by nearly all the jati in this area it is rather surprising that, according to the investigator's earlier survey, only 40% of the sample had made such marriages, although Good (personal communication) as well as Rao and Inbaraj (1977), found far higher percentages in Tamilnadu. If Caldwell is right this kind of marriage is slowly dying out as an institution in Karnataka. In his study area the percentages had dropped from 35% to 20% over a generation (Caldwell, 1982). If Reid is correct in his contention that the practice does tend to reduce fertility (Reid, 1971), this seems to be a pity. It is also unfortunate, if it really does serve to improve the lot of the young bride, as Chamarajanagar people believe, that there is a growing tendency to look upon the institution as "old-fashioned" among those anxious to adopt and utilise urban values.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

To carry out this field research two modes of procedure were employed: on the one hand the qualitative approach of informal interviews, group discussions, both planned and unanticipated, and participant observation; and on the other the quantitative one of a formal questionnaire survey which yet allowed for a high proportion of open-ended questions which permitted the respondents to air their views, explain the process of their decision-making and modify or give colour to their replies to structured questions.

Most people's lives being an intricate tangle of choice and chance, the former line of enquiry entailed the exploration, in the context of fertility, of the way in which individuals seek to manipulate social norms to achieve their personal aims within the limits imposed by nature and culture. In a few instances the extended-case method was employed to afford a diachronic analysis of cause-and-effect linkages between conscious decision-making (if any) and physiological events over more than one generation in selected families.

In 1979, the first year of the field research, the concept of the micro-demographic approach drawing largely on anthropological methods as applied to population research was still something of a novelty, though M.N. Srinivas had already made a plea for this type of approach to questions of fertility (Srinivas,1977). Certainly it was quite unusual for an investigator to set out alone and unaided by a team to carry out such a study. To be honest, it would not have occurred to me to attempt it if it had not been for my prior experience of and long connection with the area in question. As it turned out the difficulties entailed were more than had been bargained for and were often acute.

The curious combination of loneliness with lack of privacy so familiar to field anthropologists was exacerbated in the course of this study by the necessity of my occupying several roles at once: not only those of observer and enquirer plus cook and laundress squatting on the cow-dunged floor to wrestle with kerosene stove and water pot, but those of interviewer, checker, typist, organiser and employer of interviewers. A constant stream of visitors to the thatched verandah which did duty for office, kitchen, dining and sitting room, interrupted tasks connected with the survey. They often came out of curiosity, but even more often with demands for advice and assistance, especially in the treatment of such ailments as cuts and scabies, coughs and fevers. On the other hand the necessity of operating an involuntary clinic while engaged in checking forms or of (say) the premature termination of a session with the interviewers to make room for a group of labourers taking shelter in a rainstorm did mean that at any moment the work in hand could change its aspect and expand into a lively and informative discussion group. In the same way a visit to a village for the purpose of conducting the survey often began or ended with unstructured interviews in informants' houses - not necessarily the dwellings of the sample surveyed - or in a group discussion attended by people of all ages in the street or under the village pipul tree. These discussions, as well as the unstructured conversations and transactions which took place in people's houses or in the course of walks and picnics, shopping trips, visits to informants' relatives in other villages and to the devastana or to the local shrine, not only revealed local ideals and values but also the existence of unexpected perceptions and attitudes which were plainly instrumental in contributing to fertility behaviour. Unfortunately, offers of hospitality from old or newly acquired acquaintances, while they were accepted with gratitude since they tended to be occasions for massive exchanges of information, sometimes

led to dire consequences in the form of indisposition. In fact the conditions of the fieldwork plagued the researcher with increasingly frequent bouts of illness, from gastro-enteritis through b.coli, amoebic and bacillary dysentery, finally to an attack of shingles which felt like, and perhaps was, the outward and visible culmination of a year's suppressed frustrations.

Briefly then, there was no formal structure of the time available between talking to people who wished to chat, gossip or confide and getting on with the survey. When we were not engaged in formal interviewing or group discussions, the interviewers and I - or more often I alone -tended to engage daily in long conversations on the themes of the project either in other people's houses or in my thatched dwelling in Somavarapet. Moreover, participant observation was by no means neglected in the course of the fieldwork. During the first weeks in the field I lived with a large joint family in the town, and when I lived in the village the far end of my dwelling housed a low caste labourer family whose daily life was carried on in intimate proximity to my own, many of their problems being shared with or confided to me. The couples - about 10% of the sample - with whom genealogies or extended case histories were discussed in depth were nearly all those met with in the course of the previous fieldwork or those (or their descendants) who knew and remembered the Morris family in the past. It was easier to deal in depth with old acquaintances who were not troubled with inhibiting suspicions of official interference.

The Programme

The fieldwork period began with my arrival in India at the end of May 1979, and my efforts were originally concentrated on re-establishing myself in the taluk (a) by renewing old contacts and (b) by organising accommodation for myself. The latter consisted of a room and a verandah on a smallholding adjacent to the village of Somavarapet,

about two miles from the town, the same accommodation which had been rented on previous visits to the area. As conditions there had deteriorated and repairs and some modest equipment were required before the place could be made habitable, hospitality offered by the landlord's high caste joint family in the town was accepted for a few weeks. Although this sojourn had its value and led to fruitful insights, it was a relief to move out. Unless a single group is being studied living with members of any one jati has its drawbacks, whereas the use of a place of one's own, where people are able to relax, gossip and confide, outweighs the advantage of living with a family.

During the first four months visits were made to the Indian Institute of Science, the Centre for Population Studies, the Indian Institute of Management (in search of interviewers) and the Department of Community Medicine, St. John's Medical College, all in Bangalore; as well as to the Anthropological Survey of India and the Institute of Kannada Studies in Mysore. The questionnaires were revised and re-typed, the interviewers sought and engaged and accommodation found for them (not without difficulty) in Chamarajanagar town. Pre-testing was carried out over a period of about six weeks and the questionnaires were further modified in consequence, while an interviewer who had failed to come up to expectation was replaced. The main survey started at the beginning of October (pre-testing having begun in August), and ended in April 1980. We moved into the hills in November 1979 to interview the Hinterland Low Castes in the labour villages on the coffee estates. The majority of these people come from rather inaccessible hamlets at the foot of the range, and it was easier to reach them on foot from the estates than to try to reach the hamlets by bus over roads made impassable by the persistent deluge we experienced that month, which daily soaked us to the skin. Even so our

sojourn there was not unadventurous, what with herds of elephants, overturned jeeps and a flooded river precluding access to or departure from the hills for weeks at a time. At the beginning of December, when the rain began to ease off, we were able to return to Somavarapet and make sorties to the interior villages, as well as continuing to interview other groups. In January we went up to the hills again to interview members of the Sholiga tribe, a period of strenuous walking at the end of which we had all become very fit. After that the next three months presented trials of a different sort: dust, dehydration, sweat, mosquitoes, eye-flies and insomnia, to say nothing of a local cholera epidemic, as the hot weather approached its zenith and the survey neared its end. By the last week of May the survey was completed, the forms packed in metal boxes and despatched by air-freight to Edinburgh and the interviewers paid off with affectionate farewells. The fieldwork for that year was over. Data preparation and editing in Edinburgh occupied the next ten months, and in May 1981 I returned to the area to tie up a number of qualitative loose ends and to acquaint myself with the further development of individual and family case histories. In the event this entailed the re-employment of one of the woman interviewers for two months as personal assistant in the collection of case histories and general economic and demographic background information concerning the taluk.

The Survey

The questionnaires, based on the core questionnaire and other modules provided by the World Fertility Survey, were first formulated in Edinburgh and subsequently modified and elaborated in Chamarajanagar to include questions specific to local society and circumstances. Under ideal conditions this survey should perhaps have included all local communities (*jati*) and have been carried out in a single multi-*jati* village. In practice

this was impossible. There are over thirty jati in the taluk and no one village contains either a full complement or enough inhabitants to provide adequate samples of all groups. In view of this and of the fact that previous fieldwork in the area had established that a pattern existed of ideal and actual kinship and marriage behaviour involving groups of local castes and centring on the status of women, it was decided that four representative groups, drawn either from one- or two-caste villages or jati 'quarters' in the taluk town, rural villages and the hill settlements, should be compared and that random sampling should not be attempted.

The Sample

The exact composition of the total sample to be surveyed was finally decided upon on arrival in the field. The logic of the research suggested a straight comparison of Lingayats, Harijans and Upuligas, the three largest castes in the area, comprising the majority of the population, plus a fourth group consisting of ritually high, influential and culturally allied but numerically less important castes such as the Dasa Banajigas and Jettis discussed in Chapter II of this section. But the fact that education, economic status, landholding and relative urbanisation all have a bearing on fertility required the division of the large and internally stratified Lingayat caste into two groups separated by a putative poverty line. A further contingency was the common 'unsanskritised' tradition shared by Upuligas and Harijans, the two principal labourer communities of the taluk, whose culture and customs are sufficiently alike to allow, for instance, their being housed together without uproar in the same low caste 'lines' or labour villages on the coffee estates, where they constitute the bulk of the work force. It seemed more appropriate to amalgamate them into a single low caste culture-group (exemplified by their similar norms concerning marriage and the status of women), as opposed to the high caste groups, and then to differentiate

them according to their degree of sophistication, which amounted to their geographical position vis à vis Chamarajanagar town. This arrangement provided five sub-samples: Richer Lingayats, Poorer Lingayats, Other High Castes, Town and Around Low Castes and Hinterland Low Castes, to which were added the Sholiga hill tribe, which is also a caste. This choice of representative groups seemed a fair compromise between the ideal and the contingent, in that it reflects quite well the caste situation in the area, numerically as well as culturally.

It was decided then that door-to-door visits should be made, first in the jati 'quarters' in the town and satellite villages, then in the one- or two-caste hinterland villages and settlements in the hills, and finally to wind up again in the core area of the researcher's 'own' village of Somavarapet. The optimum size of the total sample was difficult to estimate in advance. But bearing in mind that to begin with it had been supposed that the entire survey would be undertaken by myself, the solitary field investigator, and two interviewers, one female and one male, it was agreed that a sample of three hundred couples would be the maximum with which we could cope. With our six sub-samples this gave us a cell size of fifty couples. In the event it became clear after the pre-testing, which showed that we would be lucky to achieve more than one interview a day per pair of interviewers, that another pair of interviewers would have to be employed if the survey was to be completed in time and I was to be at least partially released to toil in the qualitative field as well as to carry out the duties of sole checker, part-time interviewer and general administrator and secretary.

Instead of sampling from the complete child-bearing range the couples approached were those wherein both spouses were living and where the wives belonged to the cohort 29-39 years of age.** The argument for picking on this group was that these women were likely to be just

** Polygamous unions were excluded.

completing their child-bearing or nearing completion and yet still be able to remember details of such occurences as miscarriages and neo-natal deaths as well as the duration of periods of lactation and abstinence. To avoid collusion, wives and husbands were interviewed simultaneously but separately. Of those couples we approached we had 94 refusals and 178 deferments. We found 157 ineligible, mostly on account of the wife's age. We usually took three deferments on the part of any couple as tantamount to a refusal and did not trouble them again. The breakdown of refusals by caste-group is interesting. We had only 12 from Richer Lingayats as opposed to 21 from poorer Lingayats, and only 14 from Hinterland Low Castes as opposed to 30 from their more urbanised caste-mates. The higher caste and better-off people, who tended to feel more secure, were much more curious as to what we were about and interested in the project. The Poorer Lingayats and Low Castes from the more urbanised areas had probably learned enough of the sterilisation excesses of the mid-seventies to be wary, while it appeared that the Hinterland Low Castes, many of whom were interviewed on the plantations in the hills, welcomed any sort of diversion. (Many of the women actually complained of being bored and said that it was only the good pay that kept them there). Only 10 each of the Other High Castes and the Sholigas refused to be interviewed. This was probably due respectively to sophisticated curiosity and a desire to be obliging to a member of the Morris family. But one Sholiga woman fled in mid-interview, suspecting, her friends told us later, that it might be leading up to forcible sterilisation. We never saw her again.

On the whole, once their fears were allayed that my interviewers and I might represent some alarming new prospect of official duress (a world-wide reaction to forms and formal questions), many of those who agreed to be interviewed replied so freely and at such length that

we found ourselves the recipients of confidences which subsequently proved difficult to classify and code. This was particularly the case with wives, who often used the interviews as an occasion for unburdening themselves of pent-up domestic grievances.

The Interviewers

These were all postgraduate students of Mysore and Bangalore Universities, none of whom had had any previous experience at all of social surveys and the techniques of interviewing. It is hard to say whether or not this was a good thing. At least it meant that they could be taught what to do without argument. Trained interviewers are hard to come by in south India and, in spite of looming unemployment, harder still to persuade to undertake a venture into the terra incognita of the rustic backwoods. Eventually, after a false start with a disappointing male candidate during the pre-testing, a married couple from Bangalore were engaged, a girl from Chamarajanagar and a young man from Mysore. The two girls were much quicker to learn, more conscientious,and spoke much better English than the men. The chief difficulty with them all was an apparent inability to recognise inconsistency in recording the replies of the respondents. That is,they tended, especially during the first month or two, to write down contradictory replies without noticing that they were contradictory. Or, in view of the plural attitudes so strikingly evident in the area, they may have taken the contradictions at their face value, accepting the fact that people are capable of entertaining two conflicting beliefs at once. In any case, cross-questioning as to the phrasing of the respondent's replies usually sorted out apparent anomalies.

To do them justice, all four of the interviewers remained cheerful and willing throughout conditions of work which were more often than not extremely difficult.

Since respondents were most likely to be found at home together in the evenings, interviews (except in the houses of the wealthier respondents) were usually conducted by torchlight, squatting on the ground, and involved a running battle for privacy which only too often was a lost cause. Moreover they all endured with admirable stoicism the months of torrential rain which drenched us from July 1979 to January 1980, and the months of heat and dust which followed.

The daily sessions in the course of which the researcher questioned the interviewers in depth after checking the forms, about those interviews at which she had not been present, turned out to be very useful. Not only did they solve and straighten out apparent gaps and inconsistencies, but they also resulted in exchanges of information which were often enlightening to all the parties concerned, which put flesh on the bare bones of the respondents' answers to structured questions and placed these answers in their individual domestic, cultural and local contexts. These sessions were also social occasions conducted over coffee or soft drinks, leavened constantly by mirth, which helped to lighten the burdens of discomfort, frustration and misunderstanding with which we all had to contend.

One problem which was never solved was that all the interviewers, one Lingayat, two Brahmans and one Ursu (the Mysore royal caste) were from high castes. Attempts were made to find a low caste couple with sufficient education to undertake the job, but they were unsuccessful. This was a pity, as in some sections of the questionnaires, such as those concerning previous marriages and divorce among the low castes, as well as in the status of women section, a certain amount of 'whitewashing' (i.e. of self-presentation as 'sanskritised') was performed to impress the interviewers which, when checked upon, was found to be demonstrably untrue and a waste of precious time.

Data Analysis

Data preparation for machine analysis began at the University of Edinburgh in July 1980. Coding was completed by the end of that year. I took an SCSS course early in 1981, and thereafter proceeded with cross-tabulation, using the facility of the Edinburgh Regional Computer Centre. After my return to India at the beginning of May, data analysis was resumed in August, and the first draft of the report for the Overseas Development Administration was begun in October 1981, the report being completed in March 1982. The thesis in question was begun in October 1982. The object of the qualitative aspect of the research has been that of illustration, endorsement and authentication of the numerical data. It also serves as a reminder that each one of the demographic statistics discussed in these pages is both a product and a symbol of an event of profound, indeed literally vital, importance to the individual concerned, quite apart from its significance for the local collectivity, the nation, and ultimately the overburdened world.

SECTION TWO ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

CHAPTER VI Preliminary Observations

The dimensions of caste which I believe to have the most effect on fertility will be canvassed in the following pages. The coded data referred to in this section were prepared from replies of respondents entered in the questionnaires designed at the outset of the research and many of the quoted verbal commentaries of individuals were culled from the same source. The rest were recorded in the course of informal interviews and discussions in the field. The analysis begins with the cross-tabulation of the key dependent variable, Current Family Size, with the key independent variable, Caste - or rather Caste Group. Since all the respondents were born into their caste this remains an antecedent variable throughout. The term Current Family Size refers to the number of children living at the time of the interview, born to each couple in the sample interviewed, and does not include any children of any previous union(s) in which either spouse may have engaged. As we have seen, the sample excluded widows and (recognised) polygynous or polyandrous unions.

In table 1 the original Current Family Size frequencies are given, ranging from no children to eight children. Apart from this table, where percentage and mean distributions of Current Family Size are given, they have been collapsed into three categories, A,(0-1 child), B,(2-3 children), and C, (4-8 children). The collapse was made in this way to obtain a fairly balanced distribution. There are not, for instance, enough cases in the zero category to be of significance except among Caste-Group VI, the Sholigas. This breakdown has had

Table 1: Current Family Size by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Current Family Size									
		No children %	One %	Two %	Three %	Four %	Five %	Six %	Seven %	Eight %	Total (=100%)
I		6.0	10.0	22.0	34.0	12.0	6.0	8.0	0.0	2.0	50
II		4.0	12.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	8.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	50
III		6.0	10.0	26.0	32.0	8.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	50
IV		4.0	14.0	12.0	30.0	22.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	50
V		6.0	14.0	20.0	18.0	14.0	22.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	50
VI		12.0	30.0	18.0	18.0	10.0	8.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	19	45	64	81	38	34	15	3	1	300
	%	6.3	15.0	21.3	27.0	12.7	11.3	5.0	1.0	.3	

the perhaps unfortunate effect of under-emphasising the dichotomy between two and three children, and it should be remembered that the B category includes two-child families, the ideal urged by the official family planning posters, although they inevitably depict the composition of this ideal family as one of each sex. Few indeed are the Indian couples, especially in a provincial backwater like Chamarajanagar, who would choose to have no children at all, (as people said repeatedly, "It is natural to want children"), not only because children, theoretically at least, represent insurance for the parents' old age, but because it is considered highly inauspicious to be childless, and couples in this condition, especially the unfortunate wife, suffer loss of face.

Judging by the comments of respondents the former consideration tends to be felt less deeply nowadays. Many of them said they hoped to remain independent in their old age, mostly on the grounds that sons could no longer be trusted to be filial, and this implied the wish to be financially independent (cf. Vlassof and Vlassof, 1980). On the other hand anxiety about the social stigma attached to childlessness still seems to be prevalent. As a rich Lingyat expressed it, "Without children my wife would not be respected in society". In view of the need for the esteem of that powerful and all-pervading moral mentor, 'society', in the form of kin and neighbours, and the desire to 'hold up one's head in public', childlessness can be fairly safely assumed to be an involuntary state of affairs, at least among rural and unsophisticated provincial people in India. One exception in Chamarajanagar was an Upuliga wife, mother of three, including a son, who declared that children were nothing but a burden. Her ideal family size, she averred, was none, and she added "In my opinion girls would be well advised not to marry at all". Upuligas are renowned in the area for speaking

their mind. Another exception was a Sholiga husband who said that he was not interested in having children.

On the other hand a surprising number of couples, 5% of the whole sample, had voluntarily opted for only one child, in spite of the fact that early-age mortality figures in South Karnataka are still quite high, about 100 per thousand in 1975 (cf. Srinivasan, Reddy and Raju, 1975). Admittedly the majority of those desiring only one occurred among the Sholigas, but there were also cases in the other caste-groups. Nevertheless, to be satisfied with only one child is relatively rare in our area, as in other parts of India, and the importance of the differential between the B and C categories should be recognised, since in Indian terms it is the difference between small and large families.

At this point it should be noted that mean current family size for the whole sample surveyed is 2.9 (the mode being 3). This is not a high figure for a small-town and rural area by all-India standards, albeit one which is reduced by the low figures for the Sholigas. The Sample Registration Survey for rural India as a whole in 1977 gives a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 4.8 (Sample Registration Survey Bulletin 1982).

Of course this mean figure for our sample represents no more than a stage in the domestic cycle of the couples concerned. Nevertheless, within a cohort aged 29-39, as ours was, a proportion of the wives will already be nearing the end of their reproductive years, either in the course of natural ageing or on account of cultural constraints on those whose children are about to start on their own reproduction - and a woman aged thirty in this area may well be a prospective grandmother. When it is considered that a high percentage of the others had also taken steps to cease child-bearing, as we shall see in the next chapter, and that - if they are to be believed - a further percentage of couples planned to do so in the near future (mostly on the grounds of the rising cost

of living), it seems legitimate to suspect that figures for mean completed family size of the sample as a whole might not be substantially higher. Judging from table 20a, couples in all groups appear to be adopting contraception at an earlier age than heretofore.

The figures for mean current family size and the total number of children per caste-group in the sample are as follows:

Mean family size		No.of children per caste-group	
I:	3.0	I:	149
II:	2.8	II:	139
III:	2.9	III:	144
IV:	3.1	IV:	157
V:	3.1	V:	156
VI:	2.2	VI:	112

Table 1 reveals that the three high caste-groups have a lower percentage of C (4-8) families and a higher percentage of B (2-3) families, this situation being reversed in the case of the two low castes. But a simple two-way dichotomy between higher and lower castes, or 'sanskritised' and 'unsanskritised', however convenient it would have been, is frustrated by the Sholiga figures, which fail to fit into the pattern. Although culturally a part of the 'unsanskritised' category, Sholigas had a very high percentage of A(0-1) families and a low percentage of C, or large families. They also had, besides the lowest mean family size, the highest percentage of childless couples, 12% of the Sholiga couples interviewed.

CHAPTER VII CONTRACEPTIVE PRACTICE

1: An Overall View

In 1952 India became the first country in the world to initiate a family planning programme as part of official Government policy. During the first decade of its existence its efforts were mainly directed to the provision of clinics and the dispensing therein of modern chemical and mechanical contraceptives, with instruction as to their use, as well as advice on such traditional methods as 'rhythm' (safe period), withdrawal (coitus interruptus) and abstinence. Sterilisation could also be performed where the clinics were run by gynaecologists. After 1961, when the alarming implications of the 'population explosion' in India as revealed by the 1961 census had been digested, Government strategy reflected a much greater financial commitment, along with a shift from the 'clinical' to the extension approach, with emphasis on publicity and education through field workers. In the following decade family planning became integrated with maternal and child health services, under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning.

Although the main burdens of expense, research and planning continued - and continues - to be borne by the Central Government, State Governments were made responsible for the implementation, along with health and family welfare, of the Family Planning Programme, services being provided by a network of hospitals and clinics. Urban Primary Health Centres (PHC), one per 10,000 population, have medical staff and undertake sterilisations and insertions of intrauterine devices (IUD). Rural subcentres based on each PHC are staffed by male and female 'multi-purpose' workers, cater to simple health problems and supply condoms, contraceptive jellies and tablets etc.

In the mid-seventies, with the declaration of the 'National Emergency' (June 1975 - January 1977), the

subject of family planning sprang into prominence. The programme became so aggressive that sterilisation acceptance figures rose dramatically, largely through coercion or fear of coercion. (Physical proximity to Delhi was a considerable factor, however, affecting high or low family planning achievement in the States [cf Gwatkin 1979]). They fell with equal rapidity after the defeat of the Congress Government in the 1977 elections, in which the question of family planning was a major issue. For the next two or three years the matter remained a highly sensitive one, both for the succeeding Janata party Government and for Mrs.Gandhi's Congress party when it was returned to power in 1980, to say nothing of the anxiety and suspicion with which it was regarded by the man and woman in the street and the village.

That certain other reactions, unconnected with the excesses of the Emergency 'crash' campaign but still unlooked for by the planners, had contributed to the family planning programme's lack of efficiency was revealed in the survey (mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis) undertaken by the Population Unit of Karnataka State Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangalore, in 1977. The survey disclosed that, while more couples than ever before were using modern contraception to cease child-bearing after producing a number of children, birth intervals were in fact much shorter than heretofore. This was due to the abandonment, at least in urban areas, of such traditional methods of family planning as long post-partum abstinence periods. In consequence, when figures for 1975 were compared to those of a generation earlier (1951) they showed a fertility decline of only ten per cent, although knowledge of modern contraception and its availability was now as widespread as ignorance of it had been twenty-odd years before (Srinivasan, Reddy and Raju, 1977). This finding has been confirmed by Caldwell (1982) for the area he

studied in Karnataka, and to some extent by my fieldwork in Chamarajanagar. In the past the birth rate had also been kept down by permanent abstinence on the part of parents when their offspring reached the stage of reproduction; reduced intercourse when the husband reached his mid-thirties (since coitus was believed to sap a man's strength); and abstinence at festival times and on inauspicious or sacred days. Some of these beliefs still have currency in Chamarajanagar and may well contribute to lowered fertility there.

However, although the population of India increased by about 140 million in the decade 1971-1981 (1981 census figures), it looks as if fertility really has begun to decline at last, at least in the South (see Caldwell 1982, p.5). According to A.K. Jain and A.L. Adlakhar, quoting figures arrived at by the Registrar-General's office, 1980 and 1981, the crude birth rate was reduced by 9% between 1972 and 1978, the total fertility rate (TFR) by 21.8% and the total marital fertility rate (TMFR) by 20.9% (Jain and Adlakhar, 1982). Veena Soni points out that nearly a quarter of all Indian couples in the reproductive ages are currently practising modern contraception. In 1979-80, the year of the Chamarajanagar survey, 113.9 million, or 22.3% of the population at risk, were using modern methods. Of these, 19.9% had been sterilised, 1.0% were using an IUD, and 1.4% were employing other methods such as condoms, diaphragms, creams etc. (Soni 1982). In south India, which had escaped much of the Emergency pressures, fertility has fallen faster than in the rest of the country. The national Sample Registration System (SRS) revealed that this process was speeding up in the latter part of the nineteen-seventies, with, by the end of the decade, a birth rate of 28 in Karnataka compared to one of 33 for all-India, revealing a fall of about 30% for the State and 17.5% for the whole country during the past fifteen years or so. In other south Indian States the fertility levels are even

lower than in Karnataka. In the rural area of Karnataka studied by Caldwell about 31% of couples of reproductive age were practising modern birth control in 1980. (Caldwell,ibid. 1982). This compares well with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare figures cited by Jain and Adlekhar (1982) which gives an all-India urban percentage of 35.5 and a rural percentage of 16.4, but only 22.8 urban and 20.3 rural for Karnataka. The Chamarajanagar survey shows even higher levels of acceptance than Caldwell's: 38.6% sterilised and 8.6% using IUD. If we are to believe the wives in the Sholiga tribe who claimed to have been rendered sterile by their traditional method of birth control (8.7% of the total sample), and the wry comments of their spouses predispose me to give them some credence, over half (55.9%) of those interviewed in the Chamarajanagar survey had taken steps to cease child-bearing, or believed themselves to have done so. Caldwell gives a figure of one-third for his field area of Karnataka, 88% by tubectomy, but his figure, prudently, only takes account of modern contraceptive practice (Caldwell op. cit. 1982).

When Caldwell's team first began their Karnataka study in 1979 they expected to find that rural couples still needed large families for the economic contribution by children of work and wages. If there had been a fall in fertility they were inclined to suppose it to be due to the efforts of the family planning campaign alone. But, though they did find that children, especially those of smallholders, still worked obediently, "...we increasingly gathered evidence that there is now a considerable demand for family limitation and that a major component of this demand is the economic burden of a large family" (Caldwell, op.cit. 1982, p.17). He might have been speaking of Chamarajanagar, as we shall see in Chapter VI below. Although far the largest proportion of Chamarajanagar respondents gave economic reasons for accepting modern contraception or wanting small

families, another important set of reasons reflected the concern of wives, and sometimes of their husbands, about having more children than they could physically cope with. Their arguments not only testified to the effect of too frequent child-bearing and lactation on the health of the wives, (many of them, already anaemic, feared for their lives, as we shall see below), but on their working and earning capacity, if the couple was poor. Not that there is anything new in these fears. In my mother's day she was often approached, as I was a generation later, by desperate women seeking help in procuring an abortion or begging for "medicine" to prevent further pregnancies.

It is not only husbands who force women to go on child-bearing beyond their own desire to do so, although the refusal of husbands to consider using any kind of family planning or birth control, modern or traditional, was a frequent cause of complaint, but also other relatives, especially affines. For instance, a poor Lingayat woman who had undergone a tubectomy after three children said she had wanted to have the operation after two, but her mother-in-law had insisted on her having a third. Another said she had wanted to cease child-bearing after her penultimate child, but her own grandfather had urged her to have one more. All the wives who reported that a mother-in-law or other relative had insisted on her having another child against her will were members of the higher castes. The opinion of 'society', more or less synonymous with kin and neighbours, was also frequently referred to in this context, though usually in association with the desirability of having a child of a particular sex, not by any means always a male, as we shall see. Many informants gave the respect of 'society' as their reason for having any children at all. However, judging by my data, husbands appear to be the principal

culprits, not by any means because they always want larger families, but because they are so often reluctant to use any form of contraception. Some of the low caste men surveyed who said that they only wanted a couple of children ("How can we feed more ?"), were using no contraception, modern or traditional, and did not seem to intend to do so. This is an example of the south Indian capacity to hold two conflicting opinions or beliefs at the same time, summed up by Caldwell as 'a pronouncedly plural attitude towards life', (Caldwell, op.cit., 1982, p.16), and referred to by Sheryl Daniel as 'the problem of conflicting models' (in Wadley ed. 1980). The judicious employment of conflicting collective representations has its uses to individuals bent on manipulating social norms to achieve his/her ends, but unconscious inconsistency of this sort also has its own uses rendering motivation opaque and confusing impertinent researchers. It occasioned some hair-tearing on my part, while leaving my Kannadiga interviewers with their composure undisturbed.

All the same, times must have changed, at least in the South, in the decade since Mamdani, Joshi, Djurfeldt and Lindberg et al. protested in the early seventies that the family planning programme ignored the needs and desires of the people. In Chamarajanagar taluk, 88.6% of the wives and 85% of the husbands interviewed in the course of the survey claimed to prefer a small family, and a high proportion of these had taken steps in one way or another to avoid further pregnancies.** It is also true, of course, that some of those, especially the wives, who said they preferred small families actually had large ones which they had subsequently regretted. Others, as Dandekar pointed out as early as 1959 was often the case, and as the Khanna Study discovered, had not accepted terminal contraception until they

** It is true that many Knowledge and Practice (KAP) studies have reported such claims while the statistical evidence has refuted them. In this case, the figures seem to confirm that they really mean it.

already had several children. In some cases this was for them a solution of desperation, the lesser of two evils. "We had too many children. We had to do something". Fear of the aftermath of sterilisation is still an important factor in the rate at which fertility is falling in the State.

> 'Almost the whole population believes that prolonged weakness and pain are the likely consequences of the operation and nearly half of all tubectomised women and a similar proportion of vasectomised men reported that this had indeed been the consequence.'. (Caldwell, op. cit. 1982, p.31).

While nothing like such a high proportion of respondents complained of after-effects in the Chamarajanagar area, some did, and certainly anxiety about the possibility is widespread.

All in all, inflation, a monetised economy, unemployment, and what Caldwell calls the 'wealth flow' ** in the family, all seem to have been instrumental in altering attitudes to family size in Chamarajanagar and in speeding up the reduction of fertility during the past decade. In addition a veneration for education and in particular an admiration of technical skills and artefacts associated with or stemming from the West, for which the terms 'modern' or 'English' are often synonymous, is bringing about changes in the social climate which render it susceptible to the arguments and techniques of the family planning campaign.

> 'The decisive alteration in the society... has been economic change...and social change arising largely not as a direct product of the economic change, but fuelled from external sources, and waiting to exploit the opportunities presented by the

** The theory being that when wealth flows from children to parents, there is motivation for high fertility, while when the flow is reversed, fertility is reduced. (Caldwell 1976, 1979, 1981, 1982).

> destabilisation of the old social and economic order. The fundamental element was a basic shift in power, work and conditions within the family. The family planning programme was able to exploit the situation and accelerate fertility decline' (Caldwell op.cit. 1982, p.36).

Another theory related to fertility decline which is relevant to the situation in Chamarajanagar is that of J. Knodel, previously referred to in my Introduction.

> 'The evidence indicates that once the practice of family limitation starts to spread among the broader strata of the population, it seems almost inevitably to increase until it is a widespread behavioural pattern. In this respect modern fertility transition appears to result from the spread of innovative behaviour and cannot be viewed simply as an adjustment to new socio-economic circumstances based on previously established behavioural mechanisms' (Knodel, 1977)

Once younger married couples start using modern birth control, he says, there appears to be no turning back to earlier forms of fertility behaviour. Of course, Knodel's theory and that of Caldwell are not mutually exclusive. In a way A.K. Jain is expressing both their views when he suggests that education for women will bring about decreased fertility even if they do not find jobs, simply because they will have been exposed to new ideas. As a Lingayat woman of Chamarajnagar who had had a tubectomomy put it: "I did it because they say two or three children are enough". "They" were not only her neighbours but also members of the local opinion-forming élite, mostly (in 'Nagar) female doctors or members of the Rotary Wives' 'Inner Circle', who go about dispensing advice and encouragement to less fortunate members of their sex in the true Lady Bountiful tradition.

Indeed the part played by the opinion-forming élite in the growth of family planning and the reduction of fertility should not be underestimated. As Avabai Wadia says

> 'Movements bringing about fundamental social changes have often had small and humble beginnings. They have usually been initiated by individuals or small groups of people who....have been so deeply convinced of the vital importance of their ideas and beliefs that they have been willing to withstand opposition and misrepresentation in the promotion of their cause. This has been the case with the family planning movement in India' (Wadia, 1982, p.1).

The movement was instigated by private people, (albeit educated and quite comfortably-off private people), voluntary workers have always been deeply involved, and the Government is now working hand-in-hand with the private sector. At the rural level the precepts and practices of local élites in touch with 'external sources' tend to be accepted and followed by those who look up to them, and lead to a diffusion of innovation which tends to become customary in the next generation. We have seen in an earlier chapter how changes in life-style have separated the New from the old élites in Chamarajanagar. It is the New, younger, élite who represent the mould of fashion in the area, and this includes fertility behaviour.

2: Sterilisation

Since this is by far the most common method of family planning practised by Chamarajanagar acceptors, amounting to 38% of the total sample surveyed, it will be the first to be discussed. Table 2 cross-tabulates with caste the number of couples of whom either the wife or the husband had been sterilised. It should be remembered that in all caste-groups except the Hinterland low castes and the Sholigas tubectomies far outnumber

vasectomies (i.e. the former constitute 70.6% of those sterilised), probably because of a deep-seated association of vasectomy with castration. In the case of group V, the HLC, the numbers of tubectomies and vasectomies were equal, 8 of each, partly one suspects, because the financial contribution of wives to the family income was higher in this group and therefore more likely to be missed during the longer recovery period necessitated by the female operation. In the case of group VI, the Sholigas, there were 3 vasectomies and only one tubectomy, most of the Sholiga women preferring to rely on their traditional 'oral contraceptive', prepared from the bark of a jungle tree. Incidentally the Sholiga wife who had the tubectomy had only two children, both girls. She said this was her desired family size, irrespective of sex.

It is noticeable that in caste-group III, the most sophisticated group, as many as 62% of the couples interviewed had opted for the sterilisation of either husband or wife. In the other two high caste groups about half or nearly half of the couples had also decided on sterilisation. The percentage of those sterilised in the two low-caste groups are much lower, which is interesting in view of K. Mahadevan's findings in Tamilnadu, mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, whre the highest percentage of sterilisation acceptors were in the low-caste group. While most of those interviewed in the Chamarajanagar group IV do have access (albeit limited to those who have the bus fare or the energy/time to walk there), to the town Primary Health Centre, which has 24 beds, or to one or other of the sub-centres (of which fearful tales are told), their attitude to sterilisation is much the same as that of group V, for whom access is difficult. Both sexes fear loss of strength and thus their ability to earn their living as labourers.

A follow-up study of the psychosocial effects of sterilisation carried out by the Population Centre in

Bangalore found that over 60% of both female and male acceptors felt that they were weaker after they had recovered from the operation (cf Caldwell 1982, p.31), besides reporting a reduction in sexual enjoyment. The researchers suspected that to some extent this reported loss of health and pleasure might be imaginary, or rather, psychosomatic, since when the acceptors were divided into two groups, literate and illiterate, it was found that more illiterates claimed to suffer adverse reactions (Reddy and Raju, 1979). On the other hand it is also possible that as literacy is a concomitant of a reasonable economic status the majority of the literate acceptors were able to afford better after-care and a longer period of rest.

Nevertheless, 116 couples (38.6%) out of our total sample of 300, had accepted sterilisation of one or the other spouse, and complaints about distressing after-effects were rare. In fact a number of respondents specifically volunteered that their connubial life had improved since the fear of unwanted conception no longer haunted them. Furthermore 39% of the sterilised couples had accepted before the wife reached the age of 31, which looks as though younger people are becoming less afraid of the operation and more prepared to terminate their fertility early. Some confirmation of this supposition is provided in table 20a below. The mean age of Karnataka tubectomy acceptors in 1978-79 was 29.4 years. (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 1981). According to the PHC records in Chamarajanagar town the annual number of sterilisation acceptors in the five-year period 1974-75 to 1979-80 rose from 172 (171 tubectomies and 1 vasectomy), in 1974, to 508 (504 tubectomies and 4 vasectomies) in 1979-80. These figures, which appear to show a steady rise in acceptance, conceal the fact that there has been a sharp falling-off and gradual recovery from the 'peak' year of 1976, the year of the 'Emergency', when there were 823 tubectomies and 147 vasectomies in the taluk. Incidentally, according

to a study made in 1976 by the Population Centre in Bangalore, about one fifth of male acceptors are attracted by the incentive money. This is a cash reward, now amounting to about Rs.125.00 (to include all expenses) offered to acceptors, whether the operation is tubectomy or vasectomy. None of the respondents in the Chamarajanagar survey mentioned this as a reason for deciding on sterilisation, but it could have been a contributory factor among the more impoverished couples.

By far the highest percentage, 60% of those sterilised, accepted when they had category B families, (2-3 children). It seems likely that more couples would restrict their family size to two if it were not for what I call the 'spare son syndrome', to be discussed in a following chapter. The mean number of living children at acceptance of sterilisation was 3.4 in Chamarajanagar taluk, compared with the all-India figure of 3.5 for the same period (cf Jain and Adlakhar, 1982), and with 3.6 for vasectomy acceptors and 3.7 for tubectomy acceptors in Karnataka (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 1981). The most surprising thing about these figures is that five (1.6%) of the couples sterilised decided on the operation after only one child. In the case of a Brahman and (significantly as we shall see), a poor Lingayat couple, the reason given was that they wanted to concentrate on the <u>education</u> of that one child to give him/her the best possible chance in life. The Brahman couple was Westernised and, probably for that reason, appeared untroubled that the only child was a daughter. The Lingayat only child was a son. The other three cases occurred among low caste couples. In two of the cases the reason given was the wife's poor health. In the third case the husband had been married before and was contributing to the support of three children by his first wife. (The one child was a girl and the wife wanted one more child in the hope of having a boy.

However her husband had not only refused to agree but had insisted on her undergoing the operation). Incidentally, when these five couples are added to the eight Sholiga couples who claimed to have ceased reproduction after one child, we have a figure of 4.3% of the total sample having decided on only one child, which seems somewhat unusual for India.

The most frequently reiterated reason given by acceptors of sterilisation in the Chamarajanagar survey was their inability to afford more children. Of the accepting couples, 56.8% of husbands and 42.2% of wives gave this explanation for their decision to terminate the procreative period of their lives. The number of those in each caste-group citing this economic rationale was more or less proportionate to the number of acceptors in each group, but not quite. More members of caste-group II, Poor Lingayats, did so that any other group, followed by the Other High Castes, group III. Since the Poor Lingayats on the whole combine low income with high expectations this is understandable. In the case of the OHC the increasing cost of children was also the motivation. The 'modern' expenses of higher education and the gadgetry demanded by the increasingly sophisticated young - hi-fi equipment, tape recorders, scooters - have merely increased and not replaced the huge cost of grand weddings: anything from Rs.15,000 to Rs.20,000 for a son and Rs.20,000 to Rs.100,000 for a daughter. But in general the desire to have children, especially sons of course, capable of earning in the towns so as to contribute to the family patrimony, (usually but not invariably land), means economic investment in the child while the child remains a dependent much longer. At the same time the cost of food and clothing is rising to make the support of dependents an increasing burden.

It is ironic that, although the contributions of educated children, especially in the 'Government job' so often hopefully mentioned as the much-desired goal

towards which parents strive, is deemed to be vital to the survival of the corporate family and family property, this ambition contains the seeds of its own destruction. Educated sons, daughters and daughters-in-law are less biddable. If coerced they are able, and therefore likely, to break away from parental control to form their own nuclear households. Educated wives tend to have more influence over their husbands and less fear of their mothers-in-law. Thus while on the one hand more and more parents, especially those with some education themselves, feel it incumbent upon themselves to invest in the education of their children in the hope of a return from those children's outside earnings, at the same time the return in veneration, cooperation and obedience on the part of children is diminishing. A number of well-off parents whose income and property would suffice for their old age were aware of this. They were educating their children, they said, to enable them to be independent, to stand on their own feet in the world. The return they expected was in the form of intangibles such as pride in the achievements of their young. As the less sophisticated put it: "They will enable us to hold up our heads in society. They will bring us a good name". Although Chamarajanagar respondents did not always spell it out in this way their comments, with few exceptions, were to the effect that while in the past a large family was an asset it was no longer a worthwhile proposition. The survey showed that by 1979-80 the modal number of children after which a couple opted for sterilisation was three.

The next most important reason given by both husbands and wives was the wife's health, or sometimes the health of both spouses. A great many low caste women were anaemic as a result of the stresses of pregnancy, lactation, childcare and housework (which includes

the carrying of heavy water vessels, sometimes for long distances), over and above their daily manual labour. Some of them felt that child-bearing was killing them. In some cases the wife confided to the interviewer that she was so drained and exhausted that she was convinced she had not long to live - and the poor soul may well have been right. Although a few husbands seemed disinclined to give a thought to the difficulties of their wives, others were truly concerned. Indeed more husbands than wives gave the wife's health as a reason for sterilisation. In all 34.4% of those sterilised gave as their reason the health of one or other of the couple, usually that of the wife. The wives' fear for their own health included fears (among the low castes) that repeated pregnancies and lactation would reduce their earning capacity in the fields or on the coffee estates.

The third most frequently cited reason for acceptance of sterilisation, 24.1% of the acceptors, was the desire to concentrate care and available income on the existing children. One may suppose that this wish had always existed among a large proportion of the population but that with the availability of modern family planning techniques it is now amenable to fulfilment. It is also possible that the FP programme has motivated couples to concentrate on quality rather than quantity, so to speak. One Harijan with two sons and two daughters said he would not have minded having a fifth child, but had been persuaded into a vasectomy by a health worker on the grounds that the four existing children needed all the nurturing the couple could expend on them. An Upuliga whose wife had borne him five children, two of whom had died, described how, while he was in hospital after an accident, the compounder had talked him into having a vasectomy while he was there. The manager of

one of the coffee estates had advised a number of his workers to undergo sterilisation. Their reappearance from hospital alive and well and able to undertake work again and their subsequent freedom from anxiety about unwanted pregnancies encouraged other couples on the same estate to follow their example.

Several of our male respondents had made covert arrangements to have a vasectomy, their decisions to do so having been governed, if not by impulse, at least by an unilateral resolution which precluded any prior consultation with kin which might have turned them from their purpose. In one case a high caste husband from a strict joint family household, married to a classificatory sister's daughter with mentally handicapped relatives in her lineage background, deeply feared their production of such a child. After their third normal child he consulted a doctor secretly and underwent the operation, to the subsequent outrage of his parents and relief of his wife. In another a Sholiga husband with four children took the unprecedented step, for a Sholiga, of travelling to the town to have a vasectomy. He did so, he explained, because his wife would not take any steps to avoid further births and his beloved eldest daughter, eight months pregnant, had just been deserted by her husband. "Women have so much sorrow", he said, "I can't bear the thought of seeing another little girl of mine suffer like that."

While the majority of Chamarajanagar respondents were well aware of changes in the socio-economic climate as well as the availability of advice on family planning, and were willing, often anxious, to discuss, at times with pithy shrewdness, the reasons for change and the advantages accruing from family limitation, a good deal of the fear and doubt referred to above was also voiced among the poor about the consequences of

sterilisation. Many of the wives who wanted to cease child-bearing nevertheless said they dared not have the operation "Because I can't afford to rest afterwards", or "I can't afford to be weakened, as I have to do manual labour". On the other hand, when a couple did agree on sterilisation more often than not, as we have seen, it was the wife who had the operation, not only because of the castration association for vasectomy, but because in most cases it is still the husband's well-being which is more important in economic terms to both spouses. Nor does this situation look like altering in the near future. Of the 69 Chamarajanagar couples,(23% of those interviewed) who proposed to use family planning in the future, 36 (52% of these couples) planned for a tubectomy. In Mahadevan's 1979 Tamilnadu survey more low caste couples planned for sterilisation in the future than did members of any other group. In Chamarajanagar this situation was reversed, with more high caste than low caste couples planning for future sterilisation.

3. Modern Contraception and 'Bark Juice'

Table 2 gives the distribution of those couples who alleged that they were using some form of family planning. It reveals that only 10% of group III were not using any specific kind of family planning compared with 20% of group I. The Sholigas take third place in this table, with 28% unprotected, followed by group II, the Poor Lingayats (30% 'at risk'), group IV (34% 'at risk') and lastly, group V, with 38% 'at risk'. However, these figures fail to include the twelve pregnant wives in our survey, 2 in group I, 1 in group III, 5 in group IV, 3 in group V, and 1 in group VI. The term 'at risk' is used for convenience only, since many of those not using contraception wanted children. The questions of voluntary abortion and lactation will be discussed below. This table indicates that of those who were using modern contraception in 1979-80, the majority belong to the high caste

Table 2: Acceptance of Family Planning: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Family Planning					
		Sterilisation	Modern Contraceptive	Abstinence/ Rhythm/Withdrawal	Bark Juice	Total Acceptors	Total (=100%)
		%	%	%	%		
I		48.0	18.0	16.0	0.0	41	50
II		50.0	12.0	8.0	0.0	35	50
III		62.0	14.0	14.0	0.0	45	50
IV		32.0	4.0	30.0	0.0	33	50
V		32.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	31	50
VI		8.0	0.0	12.0	52.0	36	50
All Caste-groups	N	116	24	55	26	221	300
	%	38.6	8.0	18.3	8.6		

and more urbanised groups, I, II, and III. Eight per cent of all couples in the sample were using an IUD, 8 (2.7%) were using a condom or nirodh, and only one (0.3%) was on the 'pill'. She was needless to say, a Westernised member of caste-group III. Only two couples in caste-group IV were using modern contraceptives, one nirodh and one IUD. In both cases, a higher 'class' status had been achieved through education and a reasonably-paid Government job. Apart from these no low caste couples were using contraceptives. By contrast, 52% of Sholiga wives reported that they had taken bark-juice.

Before going on to discuss the use of traditional methods of family limitation among all groups in the sample surveyed, it is necessary to devote some space to the subject of Sholiga contraception. An interesting ethnographic sidelight revealed by the survey is the circumstance that whereas Sholigas had the highest percentage of category A families (0-1 children), and caste-group V, the Hinterland Low Castes, the highest percentage of category C families (4-8 children), both these groups occupy a habitat well outside the normal range of family planning propaganda, advice and assistance. The members of group V mostly live near the foot of the Billigirirangan range or on the hills as coffee plantation workers. Sholigas live on the hills and nowhere else. It might have been supposed that both these illiterate and impoverished groups would have had large families. But whereas we found a good deal of ignorance of family planning and fear of modern methods of contraception among group V, the majority of Sholiga women claimed to be able to control their fertility at will by resorting to specialist women who provide them with a brew made from the powdered bark of a tree known to them as the Kambi Mara which

has since been tentatively identified as either Gardenia latifolia or Gardenia gummeria. According to Sholiga informants the powdered bark is mixed with raw sugar and taken, after a ritual hairwash, on the third day of menstruation. This is repeated for the next two menstrual cycles, and sexual abstinence must be observed for six months. The upshot of all this is that the menses are said to cease after the third month, and the women insist that they are then sterile. There was some difference of opinion as to whether this constituted permanent sterility. Most of the wives who had taken 'bark juice' believed themselves to be no longer at risk of pregnancy for good, but a few said they were using the specific to postpone the next pregnancy. An even smaller number said that the bark had unpleasant side-effects and that they dared not take it. Whether or not the Kambi Mara bark is actually instrumental in enabling Sholiga wives to regulate their childbearing with such apparent success remains to be seen. In the comparatively few cases we came across of their having large families it was always because they wished to have them, but it seems likely that a number of other factors in combination contribute to the desired effect, as we shall see in the following chapters.

The Sholiga husbands were as convinced of the efficacy of 'bark juice' as were the wives, and it is indicative of the autonomy of the women of the tribe that the men appeared to have no control over the situation and were resigned to the consequences. In the case of one wife who had taken the juice after only one child, a girl, and who said firmly at her interview, "I don't want any boys", the unfortunate husband said that he would have preferred a child of each sex but that he could not prevent his wife from following her inclination. In another case where the couple had only one living child, again a girl, both spouses had wanted a second child to take the place of an infant who had died.

But the wife's mother thought that two pregnancies were enough for her daughter and persuaded her to take 'bark juice'. "I had hoped for another," the husband said philosophically, but she has taken 'bark juice' and now it is not possible". This is a typical Sholiga reversal of the more normal situation in India where the wife is often persuaded against her will by relatives to bear another child. In a third case where the husband was not consulted his wife had decided to cease child-bearing and had taken the potion after one child, a boy. The husband, unaware of this, confided to the interviewer that he hoped their next child would be a girl. However, most Sholiga husbands were aware that their wives had resorted to this form of contraception (or supposed contraception), and some applauded the decision. One, whose wife had taken it after one child, a daughter, said, "We only want one child to love and look after. I don't care which sex it is". Another, with two girls, supported his wife's action saying, "Two children are enough. It doesn't matter whether they are male or female".

Until the bark of the Kambi Mara has been analysed it seems wiser to reserve judgment on its efficacy or otherwise. It is true that a combination of other variables could well account for the lower fertility of this group, but on the other hand one would suppose that the women would know what they were talking about when they claimed that they had ceased menstruating after several doses of the stuff. Colin Turnbull, Mary Douglas, and the contributors to the symposium on 'Man the Hunter', all agree that primitive structures which must encourage maximal use of the environment are likely to necessitate forms of birth control, although they admit that little is known about such control in these communities, apart from

the fairly widespread method of (generally female) infanticide (Turnbull 1972, Douglas 1975, Lee and De Vore 1968).

4. Single-purpose Traditional Contraceptive Practice

Table 2 shows that comparatively low percentages of caste-groups I, II, and III reported the practice of traditional methods, whereas around one third of IV, V and VI claim to use these methods. Prior to collapsing the values, it was revealed that group V had the highest percentage of those claiming to postpone or avoid further pregnancies by means of sexual abstinence. Sholigas had the highest percentage of all users of traditional methods, with 52% using 'bark juice' and 10% practising rhythm or abstinence. Only three respondents were practising coitus interruptus, two in caste-group III and one in caste-group II. These are of course both urbanised, or fairly urbanised, groups. The three rural groups did not seem to be aware of this method. Of those using traditional methods 21% relied on rhythm. Since these were fairly evenly divided between six groups and included Sholigas, it may be concluded that this is a method which has been known and practised in the past.

Turning to the 41.4% of those Chamarajanagar respondents using traditional methods of family planning who claimed to have resorted to abstinence, the majority of these reported that they were abstaining because they had enough children. But there are other important reasons for abstinence which have the same effect on fertility. The primary one is that of permanent (terminal) abstinence on the grounds of having adult children of marriageable age. It is still, among those who cling to traditional beliefs, regarded as shameful for a couple who are grandparents or potential grandparents to have a child. It is more a

question of etiquette than a taboo and sanctions against its infringement are unlikely to be more severe than the gossip and head-shaking of neighbours and kin. Nevertheless in the past it was a thing that was 'not done' and this is still the case today among the more traditionally oriented, to the amusement of some of the young.

Two couples, one Sholiga and one from group III, were already abstaining permanently although the wife was only thirty-one, while fifteen (15) couples with wives aged thirty-two to forty had also opted to cease having children by this method, all on the grounds that they had married children. When it is remembered how early girls in India tend to be married, it is not particularly surprising that a number of the women in our cohort had children of marriageable age. Altogether 19.6% of the total sample claimed to be abstaining permanently. It was hard for the respondents themselves to disentangle their motivations, but 11.3% of them seemed sure that their reason was to restrict family size on account of expense or inability to cope with more offspring, while 8.3% explained their decision in terms of grown children. It is possible, of course, that the use of traditional methods such as abstinence, 'rhythm' and the rare coitus interruptus overlapped even if only one method was mentioned in the questionnaire interview.

5. Voluntary Abortion

Although the sole purpose of abortion is to prevent an unwanted addition to the family and it is a method of immemorial usage in south India as elsewhere, it has been discussed under a separate heading rather than included with other single-purpose birth control practices. This is because it does not involve an adjustment of sexual practices and also because it is socially deprecated in our area. It is hard to say

whether this type of fertility regulation is actually infrequently resorted to in Chamarajanagar or simply under-reported. Many wives have abortions without the knowledge and possibly against the wishes of their husbands and are therefore afraid of being found out. In the course of the fieldwork, we were approached by several poor and illiterate low caste wives who were pregnant, had not told their husbands, and wanted an abortion. It is possible that in some of these cases the woman had been involved in an extra-marital affair. But it is also true, as the Mysore Population study (UN 1951) revealed, that men and their kin tend to desire a greater number of children than do their wives, who have to bear them and look after them. Still, it is true on the whole, as Srinivas points out, that "Women may not have the status to resist unwanted conceptions but they do have the knowledge and ability to abort" (Srinivas 1977, p.14). The 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act made abortion in India legal in the case of rape, contraceptive failure or medical grounds, and most of the abortions reported to interviewers were procured legally through doctors at the PHC or nurses at rural clinics and achieved either by dilation and curettage, or by injection. The figures for those reporting abortions to the interviewers are as follows:

Caste-group I:	6% of group
Caste-group II:	10% of group
Caste-group III:	4% of group
Caste-group IV:	10% of group
Caste-group V:	8% of group
Caste-group VI:	6% of group

These figures are not very high and it is possible that all groups under-reported, especially group V. It was said that the nurse at the plantations dispensary added to her income by procuring secret abortions by injection without consulting a

doctor. According to case histories I collected in the course of informal interviews, women may attempt abortion by taking abortifacients such as the seeds of the 'drumstick tree' (Murungakai) , or go to old women who use horrific methods such as the insertion of sticks or applications of powdered chillies to cause a spasm of the uterus. Some of those I was told of were ultimately successful but others resulted in sepsis or serious illness. We heard of one woman who died and another who had to have a hysterectomy to save her life. In one case the husband urged his wife to abort, so the gossip went, and she took something which blinded her. One woman said her husband was so anxious not to have another child that when she became pregnant he made her watch the total eclipse of February 1980. When this unusual remedy failed, to his disappointment, he sent her to have a legal D.& C.

On the whole attitudes to abortion in all caste-groups in my sample were mildly disapproving. In none of them did it appear to be a major method of birth control as in the case of the Tamilnadu Gounders studied by Mahadevan (op.cit.1979). In fact the situation in Chamarajanagar resembles that described by Mandelbaum when he wrote, '...despite a general condemnation of induced abortion by villagers it appears that a good many of the elder village women, and a few of the younger, have obtained abortion, generally by crude means.' (Mandelbaum 1974,p.74). Another reason why induced abortion is not included in table 2 is because nearly all those reported by wives in the survey were 'one-off' affairs, and the respondents could hardly be said to be currently 'practising' this method, whether it was achieved by modern or traditional means. An exception is the case of an Upuliga woman with two sons and a daughter, her ideal family, who said she had ended one unwanted pregnancy by taking the Murangakai abortifacient and intended to do so again should she become pregnant in the future.

6. Multipurposive Traditional Family Planning Practices

Ritual Abstinence

Apart from the grounds for abstinence discussed above, which have been termed 'single purpose' since their sole intention is that of birth control, two other practices involving abstinence must contribute considerably to the reduction of fertility in the area. The first is that of avoidance of intercourse on special or sacred days of the week, as well as over the period of the major religious festivals. Of couples in the sample as a whole 49.3% refrained from intercourse on one, (31.7%), two (15%), or three (2.7%) days in the week. Of these, the smallest number, eleven couples (or 7.4% of those abstaining on certain days) were members of group III, the generally more sophisticated OHC. In all the other groups over twenty couples, about 40% of the group, abstained for one, two or three days of the week. The highest proportion (38 couples or 76% of the group), was found among group V, the Hinterland Low Castes.

A second and more important category of abstinence is post-partum abstinence, which is truly multipurposive, since it is intended to secure the best and most tender care for the mother, (and it is held that only her own family or kutumba will provide that), the best chance of survival for the infant, and also to ensure an adequate birth interval. In south Karnataka it is the custom for wives to return to their parental home for some months before the birth of their first child, as well as for the second and often subsequent births, and to remain there for at least six months after birth or longer - sometimes over a year in the past. This is known as the 'child-care period', but its underlying and often unacknowledged function is to separate the spouses to avoid a premature resumption of sexual relations.

Post-partum abstinence is therefore an accepted method of reducing fertility, though - as in the case of other local customs - fears about its contravention were more powerful in the past. Replies to questions on post-partum abstinence in the Chamarajanagar survey were collapsed into three periods: 6 months or under, 7 months to one year, and over one year. Of those who abstained for only six months or less the highest percentage, 26.3%, was found in group III, OHC, which is to be expected. The next highest percentage for this short period was caste-group IV, which may help to explain the high rate of reproduction in this group. Of those who abstained for 7 months to a year after the birth, the highest percentage was in group III, followed by group V. And those who abstained, or said they abstained, for more than a year after the birth of a child were nearly all Sholigas (86% of their group), with only three cases from other caste-groups.

As Caldwell says, the main reason for post-natal abstinence has been to maximise the duration of lactation and thus the likelihood of the child's survival (Caldwell, 1977). In the context of south Karnataka he found that informants claimed that the period had been shortening at least since the nineteen-forties, and that it had previously been about two years. Today, because control of such matters is ceasing to be the prerogative of the older generation, it is being eroded by young husbands who exert pressure on the wives to resume sexual relations after about six months of abstinence. As a matter of interest, since so many Sholiga wives claim to practise post-partum abstinence for over a year, the question of their husbands' attitude arises. One suspects that their wives'insistence on lengthy abstinence causes husbands to wander, new liaisons to be set up, and wives to depart in disgust. Though many Sholiga marriages are permanent partnerships, others seem to consist of a kind of serial monogamy. (Nor is it only husbands who take the initiative in abandoning their spouses. A Sholiga friend of mine described with amusement how his wife's brother had been left by five wives in succession, ostensibly because they objected to his bossy mother).

Lactation. The subject of lactation is linked with that of post-partum abstinence, since in our area, as in other parts of India, it is believed that to engage in sexual intercourse during the early months of lactation is to endanger the child through 'spoiling' the milk, as well as to risk the emasculation of the husband. Table 3 shows that for caste-groups I, Rich Lingayats, III, OHC, and IV, Town and around Low Castes, one year was the most frequently given period for lactation. For group II, Poor Lingayats, the period was divided equally between one and two years. Group V, Hinterland Low Castes, had a higher percentage (33% of the group) of wives breast-feeding for two years than for any other other period, and Sholigas were the only group in which considerable numbers (37.6% of the group) of wives breast-fed for three to six years. The two wealthier groups, I and III, included high percentages (20% and 25% respectively) of wives breast-feeding for less than one year. These are the two groups most likely to be able to make informed and successful use of commercial substitutes for mother's milk, to say nothing of their ability, in general, to afford it. A surprising fact revealed by this table is the very large numbers of wives in group IV who breast-fed for only one year. This is a poor group, and although they are more urbanised than V and VI one would have expected them to have made more use of the economical form of feeding, and comparatively reliable method of child spacing, provided by lactation. It is possible that since they are the more urbanised of the low caste groups, they have been seduced by milk-powder advertising posters. Mandelbaum suggests that poor women may have shorter lactation periods because the death of their infants reduces the time after which they become fecund again (Mandelbaum 1974, p.41). But this does not explain why in this group their early-mortality figures were lower than those of group V, and indeed of group I.

Table 3: Breast Feeding by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Length of Breast Feeding Period							
		Under 6 months %	6-11 months %	1 year %	About 18 months %	2 years %	3 years %	Over 3 Years %	Total No. of children (=100%)
I		2.0	20.1	31.5	14.0	21.4	3.35	0.6	149
II		2.1	8.6	32.3	12.9	32.3	7.9	1.4	139
III		9.7	24.3	35.4	7.6	16.6	2.7	0.0	144
IV		1.9	1.2	43.3	17.1	19.7	4.4	2.5	157
V		2.5	4.4	21.7	7.0	33.9	13.4	3.2	156
VI		0.8	0.0	19.6	6.2	24.1	33.0	1.6	112
All Caste-groups	Number of children	31	86	267	95	212	85	25	857
	%	3.6	10.0	31.1	11.8	24.7	9.9	2.9	

Note: 56 cases deleted for want of adequate information

The figures for mean period of lactation are as follows:

Caste-group I:	14 months
Caste-group II:	17 months
Caste-group III:	10 months
Caste-group IV:	17 months
Caste-group V:	20 months
Caste-group VI:	27 months

On the whole these averages do reflect the respective differences in income, urbanisation and comparative Westernisation in the groups. Echoing the comments of Chamarajanagar elders, Caldwell tells us that in south Karnataka in the past:

> 'Breastfeeding was of....longer duration. Thus in the 1940s the great majority of women breast-fed for two years and many for three to five years.' (Caldwell, op. cit. 1982, p.13).

It will be remembered that the authors of the Bangalore Population Unit's comparison of the Mysore and Bangalore Population Studies noted that as a result of partial abandonment of traditional socio-cultural checks:

> '....the fertility of married women aged below 30 years has recorded a substantial increase....indicating that the spacing between children has narrowed....during the past two decades.' (Srinivasan, Reddy and Raju, op.cit. 1977, p.270).

The time-honoured customary checks mentioned by the authors were those I have been discussing under the heading of Multipurposive Practices. In Chamarajanagar prolonged post-natal abstinence and lactation, along with abstinence on certain days of the week or month, are still practised in a modified form, and the fact that they co-exist with the acceptance by some members of all caste-groups of modern forms of contraception may help to explain the relatively low family size figures for our sample. The figures for birth intervals are as follows:

The figures for birth intervals are as follows:

Caste-group I:	2.94	years mean birth interval
Caste-group II:	3.22	" "
Caste-group III:	2.90	" "
Caste-group IV:	2.95	" "
Caste-group V:	3.42	" "
Caste-group VI:	3.35	" "

According to an eminent Mysorean anthropologist:

> 'Most of the practices which have been referred to as traditional methods of restricting births are not in fact explicitly concerned with the number of births. They are merely part of the cultural milieu in which people live, and which have an incidental effect on fertility. It is necessary to distinguish those factors whose incidental effect is to restrict births from those which are an integral part of fertility behaviour....Even post-partum taboos, child-rearing practices and abstinence are methods of dealing with questions of honour and shame, or safeguarding the health of mother and child, rather than of restricting births' (Srinivas 1977, p.9).

These questions of honour and shame can be seen as the concurrent motivations which go hand in hand with those of family planning in the multi-purposive practices. It seems hard to believe, with due respect, that the cultural practices mentioned above are as adventitious in their effects as Srinivas suggests. Terminal abstinence to avoid the shame of bearing a child when one's daughter is an actual or potential mother may not be practised to keep to a given family size, but its purpose is none the less to prevent further births to the actual or potential grandparents. Breast feeding is of course primarily a matter of nurture but Chamarajanagar wives are also well aware that it tends of itself to inhibit conception. In fact they tend to place too much reliance on their freedom from risk at this time. A Chamarajanagar doctor told me that women often said to her, "But I can't be pregnant. I'm still breast feeding". Breast-feeding more frequently than six-hourly may delay the resumption of ovulation and menstruation by about a year (cf.Mandelbaum 1974), but women breast-feeding on demand older

older children partially weaned in the belief that they are protected from conception may be caught out that way. It happened to my next-door neighbour in Somaravarapet, who was occasionally breast-feeding a four-year-old boy when she conceived. When her abdomen began to swell she went to the doctor, believing herself to be seriously ill.

In the same way the 'child care period' so often referred to by Chamarajanagar people, during which wives do often remain in their parents' home, is primarily concerned with the health of mother and child, but it is well understood that one of the ways in which it safeguards their health is by preventing an untimely conception. While there are too many Chamarajanagar women who are still ignorant of or afraid of modern methods of family planning, they are able and willing to manipulate cultural norms concerning marriage and childbirth in attempting to avoid further pregnancies. It is, however, true to say that such factors as lactation and post-partum abstinence are by no means always regarded as directly affecting control of fertility. Perhaps this was the reason why some wives found it hard to remember precisely the length of such periods except in the case of their last child.

6. Discussion

Acceptance of family planning has been equated with termination of fertility in the case of those sterilised (38.6%), or using an IUD, (5%), which accounts for 43.6% of all the couples interviewed. A further 8.3% had settled for permanent or terminal abstinence, having reached the grandparental stage of their lives. This gives us just over half the sample highly unlikely to continue reproduction. Another 7.6% of those interviewed also claimed to be now sterile. These were the Sholiga women who had taken 'bark juice', and were, they alleged, no longer menstruating. A further 38 couples (12.6%) were using condoms or such methods as safe period, temporary abstinence and coitus interruptus. Of these, 14 couples, (4.6% of those interviewed), said they were currently using contraception to

avoid more pregnancies altogether. This gives us 67.5% of the couples interviewed whose intention was to cease child-bearing. Of the 32.5% remaining, 12 wives were pregnant (4%). Forty-three couples, or 14.3% of all the couples, planned for sterilisation in the near future, most of them after one child, and nearly all of them for tubectomy. Of those who said they did not intend to use birth control in the future, twenty-seven couples (9%), said they wanted another child or more children. The rest were nearly all afraid or ignorant of the whole business of contraception.

It would be naive to assume no failure rate with traditional methods of contraception, or indeed with the use of a nirodh. A strong element of wishful thinking was detectable in the replies of couples in groups IV and V, the low castes, who claimed to be relying on abstinence and safe period, and it is notable that only 8% of group II, the most sophisticated of the impoverished groups, were relying on such methods. As for Sholigas, it is hard to say. Twenty-two per cent of those Sholigas not already using some kind of fertility control said they were planning to use 'bark juice' shortly. Whether or not this preventive measure does turn out to inhibit menstruation, their reliance on it in conjunction with what appears to be systematic use of Multi-Purposive checks on fertility seems to be quite effective.

In the case of the Sholigas, and perhaps also of group II, there appears to be a direct association between lengthy lactation and post-partum abstinence and fewer children. This is also true of group IV, which, with relatively short periods of lactation and post-partum abstinence, has the greatest number of children. The figures for these groups appear to testify that the Multi-Purposive cultural practices of some Chamarajanagar castes have been important determinants of low fertility even today,

whether intentionally or not. But group V presents us with a puzzle. With the second longest mean breast feeding period and a fairly high record of post-partum abstinence, one would expect their fertility to be lower, especially as they had the longest birth intervals. One explanation may be that their family planning relies on lactation and abstinence to the exclusion of other methods.

In his paper, The Evolution of Human Reproduction (previously mentioned in the Introduction), R.V. Short states that 'Throughout the world as a whole more births are prevented by lactation than all other forms of contraception put together' (Short, 1976, p.17). He argues that amenorrhoea is the natural state of the human female, that in a 'primitive' closed society women would be in a state of pregnancy, lactation or post-partum amenorrhoea from a few years after puberty to menopause, and that births would occur at intervals of about four years. (cf. Demography of the Dobe !Kung, Howell, 1979). Now although the Sholigas are the nearest of our representative groups to the type of hunter-gatherers described above, and though they do appear to have the longest periods of lactation and post-partum abstinence, resulting in mean birth intervals approaching four years, the majority of them manifestly do not have families of about seven children such practices should produce, given their low child-mortality figures. Instead, as we have seen, caste-group V fits in much better with the pattern of prolonged child-bearing ending with a fairly large but well-spaced family postulated by Short for the 'primitive' woman. Sholiga wives, on the contrary, if their current family size figures are anything to go by, appear to cease child-bearing when they wish to do so, which is often after one or two children. They claim to achieve this result by using their purposive

contraceptive, the bark of the Kambi Mara, and to date we have no way of disproving this claim. Of course this is not to say that some Sholiga wives do not adhere to the natural norm suggested by Short.

Except in the case of group V the birth intervals make quite good sense. The mean birth interval for caste-group III need not give us pause, as this group goes in for the shortest periods of lactation and post-natal abstinence, preferring to use modern contraceptives for spacing or to concentrate their reproductive efforts into the early years of the wife's fertile period. Caste-group II, which has - after the Sholiga - the least number of children, breast-fed and abstained, on average, longer than the other two high caste groups, thus accounting for their longer mean birth interval.

A further significant though as yet unexplained feature is implicit in the following percentages for wives in each caste-group whose first child was not born until four to ten years after consummation of marriage:

Caste-group I:	28%
Caste-group II:	28%
Caste-group III:	16%
Caste-group IV:	36%
Caste-group V:	32%
Caste-group VI:	38%

It will be noted that Sholigas had the highest percentage of wives reporting such a gap. In the cases of other groups, with the exception of the relatively modernised group III, the early or post-pubertal sterility of those girls married at or shortly after puberty is likely to account for this phenomenon, at least partially, but this does not apply with such force to Sholigas, who have the highest mean age at marriage of all castes after group III, (OHC). Among the Sholiga wives reporting such a gap those with only one child had a mean gap of 5.3 years between consummation and first birth, Among the 30% of Sholiga wives with only one child, many

women specifically volunteered the information that they had been using indigenous herbal potions to avoid having a first child too soon. Since their ages at marriage ranged from 16 to 24 years early post-pubertal infertility can be discounted and it is hard to explain the length of time during which they remained infertile if the possible efficiency of their contraceptive methods is to be entirely discounted. Unless, of course, the explanation for their overall relative infertility lies in undisclosed sexual practices.

CHAPTER VIII THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND FERTILITY

We have already looked at the question of the status of women in India through the lenses of anthropological theory, mythology and cosmology, to say nothing of facts and figures derived from such prosaic sources as the Registrar General's Office. This chapter will examine the ways in which aspects of female standing and roles may affect fertility in India as a whole, in south India, as represented by south Karnataka, and in Chamarajnagar taluk.

In 1973 R.G. Amonker observed that: 'Women have been forced to believe that child-bearing and child-rearing are their only goals in life' (Amonker 1973, p.39). He suggested that this state of affairs directly contributed to population growth in the country. Three years later his premise was supported by R.H. Cassen, who noted with some pessimism:

> 'Economic development is only very gradually diffusing the correlates of fertility decline. This is particularly the case with the status of women, which is changing extremely slowly in any aspect one looks at.....One might well believe that as long as women have little chance of enjoying status-giving activities outside the family, while within it status may actually depend on child-bearing, the prospect of major fertility decline are for this reason alone somewhat slim' (Cassen, 1976, p.1175).

Toward the end of the decade a growing number of demographers and sociologists were reaching the same conclusion, the most insistent voice among them being that of Ashok Mitra. The social status of women, he maintains, is probably the most important single factor governing India's present population dilemma (Mitra 1978, 1980).

At the beginning of the eighties this perception was further refined and elaborated upon by the contributors to D.E. Sopher's An Exploration of India, who revealed through their research into sex ratios, differential

literacy and the spatial structure of marriage in India a significant cultural dichotomy between north and south India, on which anthropological discussion had previously been mainly confined to the field of kinship (Sopher et al., 1980). Their findings have already been touched upon in the Introduction to this thesis, and it will be recalled that the regional differences in 'woman's place' they disclosed (i.e. a very high value for masculinity in the North and a somewhat more equitable orientation in the South), were confirmed in the following year by Babara Miller in her book, The Endangered Sex (Miller 1981). These arguments receive ample support from the contributors to the cross-cultural collection of papers, Women's Role and Population Trends in the Third World (Anker, Buvinic and Youssef, 1982), many of whom plead for a recognition of the importance of women's work in the household, its relationship with their participation in the labour market, and the effect of both on their status and fertility.

The literature on gender relations in India, including the polarisation of cultural patterns which produce low female status along with high birth and death rates in the North and North-West and comparatively better female status along with relatively favourable demographic performance has been synthesised (see my Introduction), by Tim Dyson and Mick Moore in their paper on regional contrasts in India (Dyson and Moore, 1983). In this paper, it may be remembered, the authors draw our attention to the differential effects on fertility arising out of the contrasting traditions of north and south India. The contrasting principles of north and south Indian kinship which the authors believe to be a key contributing factor to lower fertility in the South have already been discussed in my chapter on kinship. To recapitulate, isogamic marriage (or the social and ritual equivalence of affines, and indeed of siblings); approval of marriage to kin; relatively equal contributions to marriage expenses by the parents of both

bride and groom; the retention of parental and sibling ties by females; all subserve a higher estimate of the worth of females. They are also conducive to a somewhat greater freedom of choice and movement for women, depending of course on community and class as well as on the individual situation, for south Indian women.

In Chamarajanagar, on the whole, and depending again on caste and on class to some extent, the position can be summed up roughly thus: when it comes to the sex of children, boys are more desirable than are girls, but unlike north India, where the birth of a girl is a disaster in an orthodox family, girls are far from negligible. Indeed they have an important part to play in the family schema. Many years ago, when a man employed on my parents' coffee estate took leave because his wife was about to give birth, my father (who had three daughters and no sons), said dutifully, "I hope it will be a boy". The man chided him reproachfully: "You, of all people, should know that whatever sex it is, it will be loved and wanted." This reply seems to sum up fairly accurately the kind of attitude which is the norm in the taluk, with the reservation that, after the first-born child, less care may be taken of girls. For instance, many couples will take an ailing second daughter to the public hospital where they would have taken a son to a private doctor. I shall deal in more detail with questions of the value of children in a later chapter, but would like to emphasise here that by and large women in the taluk appeared to be manifestly less disadvantaged than they are in the northern and north-western States, and that this does seem to be reflected in their fertility.

While it became increasingly clear in the course of the survey that the desire for an extra son almost certainly mitigated against fertility decline in the area, the desire for a daughter was very strong among

couples with no girls. "Girls are auspicious", or "A girl in the house bring happiness" were phrases commonly used. Many couples wanted a girl "for love and affection". Indeed one of the most commonly encountered plural attitudes in Chamarajanagar are the dual convictions that on the one hand girls are not much use to parents when they grow up as "they will only get married", and that on the other girls love their parents more than boys do and can be more relied upon to care for them in sickness or other troubles. An illustration of the latter sentiment was the reaction of a Chamarajanagar Brahman when asked his opinion on what has been described as 'the indigenous belief' that a woman's bodily substance becomes transmuted in the course of the wedding ceremony from that of her father's line to that of her husband's. (cf ~~the Introduction to~~ Chapter III of this thesis; Orenstein, 1970; David, 1973; Carter, 1973; Fruzetti et al., 1976). He was most indignant. "How could she change ? If her blood changed to that of her husband's lineage, how could she go on loving her parents, brothers and sisters as girls do ?" The feelings thus expressed have been strengthened in recent years by a phenomenon to which Caldwell also refers (Caldwell, 1982, p.22). Sons, especially those with some education, today try to get jobs in the towns, with the full approbation of the parents, since that was the intention in educating them. But once they move out they tend to lose interest in their parents and their rural natal place. The possibility of sons failing them is now well recognised by married couples in south Karnataka. A second son is frequently desired because "if one is bad, the other may help", but often a daughter is desired because it is believed that her parents' welfare remains paramount with her. A daughter is never entirely lost to her kutumba, or family, in south India, as she is in the North. This tradition is not only institutionalised by the usage of cross-cousin and sister's daughter marriage, by which sisters and brothers renew their ties, and by the

wife's annual holiday with her parents and her retreat to their household to bear her children, but also by the fact that daughters in the South are entitled and expected to return to their parents if their marriages turn out to be disastrous. Daughters are therefore increasingly regarded as a fall-back support in the event of betrayal by sons.

The gist of all this is that in general women in south India do have allies who may back them up should their desire to cease child-bearing be ignored by husbands and husband's kin. An illustrative case is that of one Chamarajanagar high caste wife who wanted to stop after three children, but whose husband insisted that he wanted more sons. When she became pregnant for the fourth time and went to her parents' house for the birth she refused, with her parents' support, to return to him until he agreed to her having a tubectomy first.

A further development of this theme suggests an amendment to the submission by Amonker and Cassen that women may have large families because child-bearing is their only way of achieving prestige. While this is undoubtedly the case with the majority of high caste, non-working, restricted women, it does not follow that unsanskritised women - at any rate in south Karnataka - have large families to gain prestige. Not only does constant child-bearing wear them out but it also prevents them from working in the fields during the later stages of pregnancy and so of contributing to the family income. Also the fact that marriage among them is not stable, particularly with regard to our caste-group V and the Sholigas, makes large families a disadvantage. While divorce is fairly rare now even among the low castes because, they allege, even caste panchayats today demand bribes in return for favourable decisions, separations and common-law unions are quite frequent and the problem of what to do with the children remains. As we have seen, I was approached again and again in 'Nagar

by low caste women who wanted me to procure them an abortion because, they said, they could not cope, either physically or economically, with another child. Given the occasional exception, most couples among the poor low caste-groups wanted at least two or three children, and it may be correct, as Srinivas suggests, that they do not have preconceptions about optimum family size. But there does not seem to be any particular prestige attached to a large family now, whatever was the case in the past, and indeed, as soon as they feel that they cannot cope with any more, the women are only too anxious to cease child-bearing. On the other hand, it seems that among the orthodox, sanskritised high castes, where the women are restricted, the bearing of many children may still confer status on a wife, so long as the family, whether joint or nuclear, is able to afford it. But with the rising cost of living the number of them who can is steadily decreasing.

1: Wife's Age at Marriage

A cardinal feature of the tangle of myths, beliefs, customary usages and masculine self-interest surrounding the image of the female in India is the stress on early marriage. Apart from the Westernised and the highly educated, women in Chamarajanagar marry young (or rather are married since the matter is more often than not out of their hands), either before or shortly after the onset of puberty. They are married young because of an intense anxiety on the part of parents, and sometimes of brothers, to shuffle them off into this honourable state as soon as possible. One element of this general idea is that a woman's primary role is that of a mother, especially the mother of sons. Another, as we have seen, is concern about her purity, both as a virgin and as a wife, the transmitter, if not the vehicle, of the 'blood' of her husband's patrilineage. The latter perturbation is

mainly confined to the high castes, where the young wife is even more closely guarded than the young unmarried girl. Among the low castes, where extra-marital affairs are more common, worries about female purity are not paramount, but it is still important to know the antecedents of children. According to the Mysore Gazetteer of 1931, an unmarried Harijan girl could in the past entertain lovers in her father's house. When she formed a permanent connection, the lover could pay bridewealth and tie her tali (wedding necklace) to legalise the de facto union. If she became pregnant, he would have to marry her or become outcasted. If this information is correct, the Harijan system has changed, overtly at least, in the past half-century, since many Harijan girls are now married before puberty like those of the orthodox high castes though they remain in their parents' home until after the first menstruation. One low-caste woman announced that her first marriage had been a kuduvali ceremony, (normally used for subsequent marriages among the low castes, and lacking the prestige of a first marriage ceremony), because she was married shortly after puberty. However she did not appear to feel in the least disgraced by this and volunteered the information while replying to a different question. Others said, laughing, that today unmarried girls only received men before marriage without the knowledge of the elders. Harijans have been trying to improve their caste image through 'sanskritisation' over the past forty years or so, and it is only recently that the political advantages of their present 'unsanskritised' and 'scheduled' position has become plain to their educated leaders. With the emergence of alternative routes to upward mobility low caste morality as far as early marriage is concerned seems to be in a state of flux.

As for Sholigas, their customary systems of marriage by elopement or by service to the girl's

parents preclude much anxiety over female purity. The Sholiga women interviewed on this subject all roundly declared that their choice of mate was their own affair.

However, for most of the other castes the whole family feels keenly the responsibility for finding husbands for daughters. One reason for not wanting female children cited by respondents in Chamarajanagar was not so much the cost of their weddings as the problem of finding them husbands (in fact for the low castes, daughters' weddings cost less than sons', because of the necessity to give thera or bridewealth gifts). This need is so over-riding that several respondents who wanted to educate their daughters admitted nevertheless that should they get a good offer they would seize the opportunity of marrying them off before the completion of their education.

One reason for this urgency is the convention that brothers should not wed until their sisters are safely married off. Married women engage actively in match-making on their unmarried sisters' behalf as much for the sake of the brothers as for the sisters themselves. Moreover, if parents die, the responsibility devolves on the eldest son to provide husbands for his sisters and then wives for his brothers, and this can be a serious burden on him. One Brahman whose wife had had a tubectomy after two sons expatiated on his heartfelt relief. He had been left on the death of his father to arrange and pay for the marriages of four sisters, and consequently had been unable to get married himself until he was over forty.

Since the older a woman is at the time of her marriage the shorter the reproductive period left to her, especially as delayed marriage may miss out the years of greatest fecundity, the age at which it is usual for women to marry may have a considerable effect on the fertility of a country, region or community. In

Chamarajanagar however, though there was a noticeable, if not unexpected, variation between the communities, the correlation between age at marriage and mean current family size was not very close in the case of our six caste-groups. Group III, containing the most educated members, had the highest mean age at effective marriage (19.8 years) but marginally more children (2.88) than group II with a low age at marriage, and significantly more than group VI. Group VI, the Sholigas, with the fewest children, had the second highest mean age at marriage, (17.56 years). Group II, with the second lowest mean age at marriage, (16.08 years), had the second lowest number of children. (2.78).

Table 4 refers to the wife's age at prastha or consummation rather than to her age at the actual wedding ceremony. This is because, contrary to what Caldwell found in his study area of Karnataka (Caldwell 1982), early adolescent marriage, officially illegal, is still fairly common in Chamarajanagar, especially among the illiterate low castes. Most of those arranging the ceremony are probably unaware that it is a penal offence and that, according to the Child Marriage Prohibition Act of 1929, the minimum legal age for brides was fifteen, until April 1976, since when it has been eighteen. When a Harijan friend in Somaravarapet invited me to the wedding of his daughter, I asked him if he did not think she was too young. "Young ?" he said in astonishment, "but she's twelve years old !". Fortunately the wife does not join her husband until she reaches puberty, which in most - but not all - Chamarajanagar communities is celebrated within the family as a rite of passage. These ceremonies vary according to community culture, but most of them underline the polar images of the female, for the menstrual fluid is both polluting as an excretion and auspicious as a sign of fertility. In most cases the girl takes a bath, sometimes after a

Table 4: Wife's Age at Effective Marriage by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Age of Wife	Caste-group							
	I %	II %	III %	IV %	V %	VI %	All Caste-groups N	%
11-13	12.0	22.0	4.0	8.0	22.0	2.0	35	11.7
14-16	44.0	42.0	26.0	54.0	46.0	44.0	126	42.0
17-20	32.0	26.0	44.0	34.0	28.0	44.0	106	35.3
21+	12.0	10.0	26.0	4.0	4.0	10.0	33	11.0
Total (=100%)	50	50	50	50	50	50	300	
Median (years)	16	16	18	16	15	17	16	

brief period of segregation, and is then dressed in festive clothing and sits in state to receive members of the cognatic kin group, mostly the women folk, who bring her kum-kum (the red powder used in many rituals) and flowers. They also offer her balls of the local brown sugar mixed with gingelly, a spice which acts as a purgative. The prestation, similar to that of temple ritual, is called arthi. Table 4 shows that in all caste-groups but III and VI, more wives married, or experienced prastha, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen than at any other age. In the case of group VI (Sholigas) an equally high percentage married between the ages of seventeen and twenty, while in group III, the highest percentage married between seventeen and twenty. The higher age at marriage of caste-group III is almost certainly due to the fact that so many of the wives had secondary education. The age-spread of Sholiga marriage can probably be accounted for by the varying ages at which girls become nubile, in view of their marriage system of 'ratified elopement'. That more wives in caste-group I were married at fourteen to sixteen, rather than seventeen to twenty, is an indication that this group contains on the whole a membership more devoted to Hindu orthodoxy than is the case for group III. Group II, the most 'sanskritised' community, and group V, the unurbanised Hinterland Low Castes, had the highest percentage of prastha occurring at ages eleven to thirteen, and Sholigas the lowest. For the sample surveyed as a whole, wives were most commonly married, or experienced post-pubertal consummation, when aged fourteen to sixteen (42%), the next most frequently-occurring age-group being seventeen to twenty (35%).

Table 5 underlines the 'sanskritised' culture of group II, where traditional anxieties about female purity are likely to be at least partly instrumental in providing the highest percentage at the lowest age. It is

Table 5: Wife's Age at Birth of First Child: Percentage Distributions

Age of Wife	Caste-group							
	I %	II %	III %	IV %	V %	VI %	All Caste-groups N	%
14-16	18	28	6	2	20	6	40	13.3
17-20	36	26	42	58	46	42	125	41.7
21-24	32	34	28	26	20	28	84	28.0
25+	8	8	18	10	8	12	32	10.7
No children	6	4	6	4	6	12	19	6.3
Total (=100%)	50	50	50	50	50	50	300	
Median (years)	20	20	21	19	19	21	20	

surprising that as many as 13% of the total sample of wives were fertile so young, and one suspects that some of the illiterate wives may have been fairly inaccurate about their age. It is noteworthy that after group III, the Sholigas had the highest percentage of girls not marrying until they were over twenty-five years old. In group III, this must in some cases have been due to the fact that they were still studying. In other cases it may have been by virtue of parents having turned down previous offers because the horoscopes of suitors did not harmonize with those of their daughters. In the case of Sholiga girls, there could have been problems about finding boys who were not of their own kula, or clan, within walking distance of their podu.

All in all, the data on wife's age at marriage is indeterminate. It may well be that the ambiguities merely imply that, bearing in mind the effects of post-pubertal infertility, the differences in mean age at marriage between communities were not enough to have a significant effect. Chamarajanagar taluk is after all still a rural region centred on a provincial town, where most girls are still wed in their teens. It is significant that mainland China's current family planning programme includes postponement of marriage for women until the age of twenty-three.(cf. Y.C.Yu,1979). It may follow that the effect of wife's age at marriage needs to be combined with additional factors to have a decisive influence on fertility. One such factor appears to be education.

2: Education of Women

Over the past three decades, it has become accepted increasingly by demographers, economists and anthropologists that education, especially of the wife, is

an important determinant of fertility. In short, educated women everywhere tend to have fewer children. Since the Mysore Population Study of 1951, which showed that fertility declined with women educated above primary level, the authors of numerous other fertility studies in India have come to the same conclusion. But, in spite of their concern over India's population growth, succesive Governments have concentrated their efforts on other aspects of the problem. R.H. Cassen summed up the position succinctly when he wrote:

> 'As for female education, which in study after study is consistently related to fertility reduction in nearly every country in the world, we can only lament - and not just on fertility grounds alone - that it is among the most neglected features of development in the great majority of Indian States' (Cassen, 1976, p.1175).

Caldwell argues that mass education, which includes the education of women, is 'the primary determinant of the timing of the onset of fertility transition' (Caldwell, 1980, p.225). Mandelbaum points out that educated girls tend to be married late because of the time taken to complete their studies - with a second degree, this brings them to their mid-twenties at least - so reducing their fertile period. 'More importantly' he adds 'an educated couple usually shares a life-style in which there is less reason to have many children and more reason to have fewer'. (Mandelbaum, 1974, p.54). T.N. Krishnan equates the phenomenal reduction in the birth rate of the State of Kerala with a rise in the average age at marriage due to female education. (Krishnan, 1976). And, in a more recent paper, H.M. Rajyaguru summarised his findings thus:

> 'The respondent's education and her age at marriage were closely intertwined in the sense that respondents who had high education

> married late and conversely acquired relatively higher education. Jointly they explained family planning acceptance better than either of them alone' (Rajyaguru, 1981, p.147).

In Chamarajanagar the testimony of informants who approved of the education of women cut right across caste and class groupings, although some of the reasons given for disapproving were manifestly governed by the community culture of the respondent. For instance there was frequent reiteration among the orthodox high castes that they could not, or would not, expose their daughters to secondary education - or alternatively higher education - once they had 'matured', that is, had reached puberty. It was, of course, a question of the protection of their purity. Some said that they would have educated their girls if there had been sex-segregated secondary schools or even colleges in their vicinity. In some cases it was a matter of keeping the girls physically sheltered and chaperoned. In other cases the worry was over the notions the girls might pick up along with their higher education, especially at university. As one rich Lingayat put it: "The college environment encourages loose morals". Girls at university, he added, were in danger of making inter-caste marriages.

An oft-repeated reason, not confined to any particular caste-group, for spending little or nothing on the education of daughters was that "they will only get married". This was basically a matter of not getting a return on a financial investment. Another commonly expressed fear was that women, if educated, would get ideas above their station. They would begin to feel "superior". "Education makes girls too independent", said a Brahman father. "With women's education the quality of Hindu culture would deteriotate". Others believed in some education for women but not equal to that of men. Secondary education, they said "is enough for girls". A rich Lingayat father expressed the view that girls should not be educated beyond Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC)./

because graduate women tended to hanker after equal rights and "The desire for equal rights ruins family happiness". A more sophisticated member of caste-group III foresaw different kinds of trouble. If girls had equal education they would only "go wandering outside the house to clubs and films and then make love marriages". In other words, if the women began to behave as men already do, parents would lose control of the marriage market.

A more topical reason for not educating women has been triggered off by increasing unemployment. Some people in most caste-groups feared that they would take jobs from men. A low caste man grumbled that "Woman's place is in the home and not taking jobs from men", and a member of the high castes said, with reason, "Boys are finding it difficult enough to get jobs now. It would be even worse for girls". This point will be discussed more fully in the next section.

Low caste respondents were more concerned with practicalities. "Poor people can't afford to educate their women", one Harijan said, "because then they would not want to work in the fields". Others claimed, with some truth, that educated women would never find husbands because there are so few educated low caste men and no uneducated man would agree to marry a girl who was his superior in this particular. Some low caste husbands took exception to questions on education for women as reflecting badly on their wives, and pointed out loyally that illiterate mothers also took good care of their children. As an Upuliga husband pronounced indignantly: "Uneducated mothers are just as capable of teaching their children good manners".

Among those interviewed in Chamarajanagar who were <u>for</u> women's education, the one caste - or rather class-associated motivation was the desire to find a well-qualified son-in-law. "If she is educated, she will get a good husband". This is a reversal of the

low-caste fear that educated daughters would not get husbands. As Mandelbaum says: 'Many parents now want to educate their girls, partly as a wise investment towards finding a worthy husband for a beloved daughter'. He goes on to say that a bridegroom who has had a good education is prized, and 'such a young man commonly requires that his bride also be educated' (Mandelbaum, 1974, p.53). In Chamarajanagar a proviso is sometimes added: even when the wife is a graduate or has further qualifications, her education should be below that of her husband. To achieve 'status consistency', as Victor D'Souza has it, there is a general preference for the wife to be either less well educated than her husband or at least to have no more than equal education with him (D'Souza, 1975). Once again the lurking fear of a wife feeling 'superior' to her husband raises its head. While educated women among the high castes may no longer reasonably be expected to worship their husbands as gods, the anxiety even among educated men over the possibility of relinquishing their position as the dominant sex is still evident.

Sometimes an educated and 'modern' young man will decide on a well-educated bride against his parents' wishes. In one case the well-qualified scion of an orthodox Chamarajanagar joint family turned down the bride they had chosen for him and asked for the hand of a distant cousin resident in Bangalore. His family were against the girl because she was a graduate of the university there and thus in their view a woman of lax conduct. In the end he succeeded in his aim, and to avoid friction the couple moved out to form their own nuclear household. They have opted for two children, in contrast to his parents, whose output was literally by the dozen.

A reason repeatedly given by low caste respondents for wishing to educate their daughters was the same as for wishing to educate their sons, the longed-for

attainment of a Government job. One Harijan father who had had a vasectomy after three daughters, planned to educate them all in the hope of achieving this goal. "There is no difference in intelligence between the sexes", he declared. "Girls should have equal chances". It was noticeable that parents without sons were no longer prepared to take a back seat in society and accept ignominy. They seemed to be spurred to educate their daughters to show that girls were as good as boys. However, having no sons was not a universal motivation. One Harijan labourer with three sons and two daughters said that, while he had no intention of educating his sons, who were an idle lot, one of his daughters was clever and he was determined that she should get a Government scholarship and go to university. Another Harijan couple with a child of each sex were also delighted with their daughter, the wife because she "loves little girls", and the husband because he was sure she would make a good teacher. He had been to primary school, and said that he had learned nothing because the teaching was so bad. His daughter, he said, would be an excellent teacher and so serve her community.

Some of the educated high castes were determined to educate their daughters for the very reasons that more orthodox and less educated members of their communities feared to educate them: to give them independence. As a factory manager, a member of caste-group III, remarked, "Girls must be able to stand on their own feet today". A Banajiga doctor said shrewdly: "Graduate status for both sexes is the minimum requirement for success in life nowadays". An Ursu banker whose daughter was training to be a doctor insisted that education for women was essential. "The entire family depends on the mother". Several Rich Lingayats were also of the opinion that higher education for girls was a necessity today, and a Poor Lingayat, struggling to afford his daughter's fees, summed it up thus:

"Education is an asset to her in every way". Incidentally all the respondents quoted in this paragraph had themselves been sterilised after two children.

Tables 6 to 7b remind us that Sholigas, with no education, had the fewest children. But leaving out this caste for the present, we see that large families are associated in this table with uneducated wives. Since caste-groups IV and V had insignificant numbers of wives with secondary education we turn to the high caste and relatively urbanised groups, I, II and III. In Table 7a, a strong relationship is revealed between secondary and higher education and smaller families. As Mahadevan puts it, "The influence of the husband's level of education on the wife's fertility is much less than her own education". (Mahadevan, 1979, p.34). There is a much higher percentage of B (2-3) families compared to C (4-8) families in the Secondary/pre-University College category of this table. And, though only 3% of wives in the whole sample were graduates, they are very important. As Robert Cassen has observed, a negative correlation exists between children born and female post-primary education, 'the sharpest drop occurring, as we might expect, at the level of college education' (Cassen, 1978, p.58). S.N. Agarwala also found that differential fertility by education was on the whole only observable for women educated above the level of secondary school. (Agarwala 1972). None of the graduate wives in our sample had large families, and it must be stressed yet again that the B category includes all those with only two children.

Table 8 confirms the findings of the previous education table. Fertility is reduced when both couples have secondary education. It is reduced still further if the husband is a graduate, and it remains low if the wife is a graduate even when her husband is not. An interesting point about this table is that it throws up three cases of wives with secondary or higher education

Table 6: Wife's Level of Education by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Wife's Level of Education			
		None/Primary %	Secondary %	Graduate %	Total (=100%)
I		52.0	44.0	4.0	50
II		82.0	18.0	0.0	50
III		24.0	66.0	10.0	50
IV		90.0	8.0	2.0	50
V		98.0	2.0	0.0	50
VI		100.0	0.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	223	69	8	300
	%	74.3	23.0	2.7	

Table 7: Current Family Size by Caste by Wife's Education: Percentage Distributions

Wife's Education by Caste-group		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
I	None or Primary	15.4	42.3	42.3	26
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	16.7	70.8	12.5	24
II	None or Primary	14.6	58.5	26.8	41
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	22.2	66.7	11.1	9
III	None or Primary	8.3	50.0	41.7	12
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	18.4	60.5	21.1	38
IV	None or Primary	20.0	42.2	37.8	45
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	0.0	40.0	60.0	5
V	None or Primary	20.4	38.8	40.8	49
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	0.0	0.0	100.0	1
VI	None or Primary	42.0	36.0	22.0	50
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 7a: Current Family Size by Wife's Education: Percentage Distributions

Wife's Education		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
None or Primary		22.9	43.5	33.6	223
Secondary/PUC		14.5	62.3	23.2	69
Graduate		37.5	62.5	0.0	8
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 7b: Current Family Size of Graduate Wives by Caste-group: Percentage Distributions

Graduate Wives by Caste-group		Current Family Size		
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	Total (=100%)
I		50.0	50.0	2
III		40.0	60.0	5
IV		.0	100.0	1
All Caste-groups	N	3	5	8
	%	37.5	62.5	

Table 8: Mean Current Family Size by Husband's Education by Wife's Education

Wife's Education	Husband's Education			
	None or Primary	Secondary	Graduate	All Educational Levels
None or Primary	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.9
Secondary	5.0*	2.8	2.6	2.8
Graduate	-	1.7**	1.6	1.6
All Educational Levels	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.9

Notes: - No cases
* Only one case
** Only two cases

married to husbands with lower educational achievements. As we have seen, D'Souza says that as a rule men feel that if a wife is better educated than her husband their traditional positions of subordination and superordination relative to each other are threatened. That is to say, the husband feels threatened. Perhaps this does not matter so much if the wife is not working, because the real threat to 'status consistency' in the family is if the wife has a more prestigious and remunerative job than that of her husband. As there were only five working graduate wives in our sample, it is highly probable that the three with husbands having no more than secondary education were non-working. In one case the wife was a Chemistry graduate whose husband was a Field Writer on one of the coffee estates. She said that she could see no possibility of ever working again (she had taught Chemistry before her marriage), as her husband's job, which he loved, was in such an isolated place.

Table 9 shows that education for the wife does have a cumulative effect. Where wives had secondary education, not only did far more husbands plan to provide their daughters with secondary education, but a larger proportion still planned to send them to university. Where husbands of graduate wives had daughters, all intended their daughters to be graduates. The effect on fertility is also demonstrable: a higher percentage of B (2-3) and a lower percentage of C (large) families with each step upward in the wife's education.

Table 9a, which leaves out the factor of the wife's education but introduces that of caste, holds few surprises - except that apparently in group IV alone the seven husbands who desired graduate daughters had a higher mean family size than those in the same group who had no such desires - one suspects that in this group, as in group V, the gap between wishing and putting into effect (in the case of limiting fertility to pay for education) is still fairly wide.

Table 9: Wife's Education by Husband's Desire for Daughter's Education: Percentage Distributions

Wife's Education		Husband's Desire for Daughter's Education				
		None or Primary %	Secondary/PUC %	Graduate %	No Daughters %	Total (=100%)
None or Primary		40.8	27.8	10.3	21.0	223
Secondary/PUC		2.8	28.9	52.1	15.9	69
Graduate		0.0	0.0	62.5	37.5	8
Total	N	93	82	64	61	300
	%	31.0	28.0	21.3	20.3	

Table 9a: Mean Current Family Size and Number of Husbands by Caste by Husband's Desire for Daughter's Education

Caste-group		Husband's Desire for Daughter's Education				
		None or Primary	Secondary	Graduate	No Daughters	Total N
I	Mean Current Family Size	4.80	3.60	2.44	1.27	2.98
	Number of Husbands	5	20	18	7	50
II	Mean Current Family Size	3.86	3.05	2.25	2.08	2.78
	Number of Husbands	7	22	7	14	50
III	Mean Current Family Size	4.40	3.33	2.91	1.64	2.88
	Number of Husbands	5	12	22	11	50
IV	Mean Current Family Size	3.35	3.17	3.57	1.40	3.14
	Number of Husbands	26	12	7	5	50
V	Mean Current Family Size	3.50	3.57	3.40	1.12	3.12
	Number of Husbands	18	14	10	8	50
VI	Mean Current Family Size	2.69	2.50	0.00	1.31	2.24
	Number of Husbands	32	2	0	16	50
All Caste-groups	Mean Current Family Size	3.32	3.32	2.83	1.51	2.86
	Number of Husbands	93	82	64	61	300

It looks as if the evidence for the negative correlation of education and family size in Chamarajanagar is fairly unequivocal. And since at least higher education today implies a degree of Westernisation (e.g., all higher education in Karnataka is conducted in English), we may take it that these two linked factors together tend to reduce fertility. Incidentally, in Karnataka, as mentioned earlier, the word 'modern' is used interchangeably with 'English' as a synonym for 'Western'.

It is tragic therefore that the efforts of State and Central Governments in India, to say nothing of the official and private sectors of the family planning campaign, have done so little to promote the cause of female education in the country. In her paper on unmarried adolescent females in rural Maharastra, Carol Vlassof concludes that the educational process in its present form is an ineffective agent for the advancement of rural women. She found that the general knowledge of girls was less than that of boys at every stage, partly because the daily routine of girls offered less scope for variety in recreation; and that the girls themselves saw their own futures restricted to marriage and motherhood, although they did hope for educated husbands and most of them desired less than four children. It looks as if there is a gaping hole in the family planning programme awaiting the attention of State and Central Governments.

3: Women's Participation in the Labour Force.

The question as to whether work outside the home for women has the effect of reducing fertility is a vexed and controversial one. A number of variables are involved, such as the type of work, especially the intangible values attached to it, and the level of reward. The contributors to S. Kupinsky's symposium on the fertility of working women (cf.Introduction to this thesis), showed that the issue is probably best examined within the context of the country concerned. In Africa, for instance,

where women traditionally have played a significant economic role, the birth rate is high, while in the U.S., where the economic role of women is also conspicuous, the birth rate is low. (Kupinsky, 1977). Clearly the association between female participation in the labour force and fertility is not direct but depends on intervening variables.

One of these factors appears to be the level of development in a nation or region. In the developed countries, Kupinsky found that: 'labour-force participation of the wife is highly negatively associated with fertility'. The higher the socio-economic status of the wives, the lower was their fertility. (Kupinsky, 1971, p.364). The level of remuneration and type of employment is obviously of great importance. As Kupinsky remarks, while there is in general some association between female labour and fertility levels, this is more often found in the modern sector of the economy. C. Safilios Rothschild maintains that the element of choice, implying a woman's emancipation, may apply only to a small percentage of working women, usually in the middle or upper middle classes.

> 'In their case, their employment may often be a tangible indicator of a corollary of 'modern' attitudes and values that may also determine their smaller desired family size. For most other women, their work involvement may hardly represent a choice or an assertion of the right to work but rather.. ...a necessity in order to survive'
> (Safilios Rothschild in Kupinsky 1977,p.356)

The low caste and Poor Lingayat women I interviewed in Chamarajanagar would agree. The majority of them replied that it was not a question of the right to work or the right to keep their own wages but of survival. They pooled their wages with those of their husbands, and often of their children, to pay for food, clothing fuel and shelter for the family unit.

However that may be, it is a matter for concern that throughout this century women in India have

been pushed increasingly out of the labour market, as we saw in the previous chapter on women's status, so that even work traditionally done by women has now been taken over by men, leaving more and more women limited to work in the household or the fields, with no way of achieving any kind of status other than by reproduction.

> 'Women's work may not tend to depress fertility as long as it does not provide an alternate and equally important identity' (Safilios Rothschild in Kupinsky, 1977, P.359).

Ashok Mitra, in his ICSSR paper, reveals the extent of the decline in occupational participation for women in a single decade, 1961 to 1971, and deplores this situation. Remunerative work with which women can identify themselves is a function, he insists, not only of health, education and technological skill valuable to the community as a whole, but of deferment of marriage and of reduction of fertility.

> 'The first aid to the perception of the economic utility of females and quickening of the need to put them into productive work....will be the first to add to the value of females as human resource by investing more in their health, education and the learning of skills and also by prolonging the total span of their working life by postponing age at marriage' (Mitra, 1980, p.42).

Although Scarlett Epstein protests that 'To advocate encouraging or forcing women within the reproductive age to enter formal employment...is not going to improve the welfare of families in the LDCs , nor is there much evidence to suggest that it will reduce fertility' (Epstein in Anker, Buvinic and Youssef, 1982, p.164), she does not explain how the women in the past, whose jobs have now disappeared, managed to integrate household responsibilities with economically productive activities. The existence of non-nuclear households and wide kin networks in India clearly facilitated these activities although a high proportion of them may have included elements of self-employment.

E.D. Driver found that agricultural labourers and cultivators in general have the highest fertility, while clerical workers had the lowest fertility (Driver, 1963). This is confirmed by the Chamarajanagar data. Although clerks are not usually well paid, they are educated at least to secondary level and tend to have expectations, especially for their children, beyond their incomes, which leads to a desire for small families. This circumstance could account for the fact that Poor Lingayats had the lowest fertility of all the groups interviewed. S.N. Agarwala goes further. Fertility, he finds, is high among the lowest paid, declines as income increases, and then rises again among high-income couples. (Agarwala, 1972). This, too, concords with the Chamarajanagar finding, with the proviso that where high income is combined with high education of both spouses, fertility remains low.

Turning to the Chamarajanagar data, we have Tables 10, 10a and 10b which testify to a correlation of high contribution (50% or more of joint income) with small family size, that is, with low fertility. Thus the percentage of C(4-8 children) families is much lower, and that of A (0-1) much higher in the 50% and above bracket. An interesting point about Table 10a is the strong contrast between the 'sanskritised' and the 'unsanskritised' groups, which underlines the low status of manual labour among high castes. It is noteworthy that in caste-group III the only women who earn all contribute over 50%, the implication being that they all earn comparatively high incomes as professional women. However, it should be borne in mind, as Mandelbaum reminds us, that it may be that educated women in India who are employed have fewer children as a consequence of their education rather of their employment.

Another notable contrast here is that between the urbanised groups I to IV and the rural groups V and VI.

Table 10: Current Family Size by Caste by Proportion of Family Income Contributed by Wife: Percentage Distributions

Wife's Contribution by Caste-group		Current Family Size A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
I	Contribution Nil	15.2	60.9	23.9	46
	Contribution below 50%	33.3	0.0	66.7	3
	Contribution above 50%	0.0	0.0	100.0	1
II	Contribution Nil	14.9	59.6	25.5	47
	Contribution below 50%	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
	Contribution above 50%	0.0	100.0	0.0	2
III	Contribution Nil	12.8	61.7	25.5	47
	Contribution below 50%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
	Contribution above 50%	66.7	0.0	33.3	3
IV	Contribution Nil	18.5	37.0	44.4	27
	Contribution below 50%	6.7	46.7	46.7	15
	Contribution above 50%	37.5	50.0	12.5	8
V	Contribution Nil	50.0	25.0	25.0	4
	Contribution below 50%	16.7	16.7	66.7	6
	Contribution above 50%	17.5	42.5	40.0	40
VI	Contribution Nil	50.0	50.0	0.0	2
	Contribution below 50%	9.1	54.5	36.4	11
	Contribution above 50%	51.4	29.7	18.9	37
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 10a: Proportion of Wife's Contribution to Family Income by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Wife's Contribution			
		None	Below 50%	50% & above	Total N (=100%)
I		92.0	6.0	2.0	50
II		94.0	2.0	4.0	50
III		94.0	0.0	6.0	50
IV		54.0	30.0	16.0	50
V		8.0	12.0	80.0	50
VI		4.0	22.0	74.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	173	36	91	300
	%	57.6	12.0	30.3	

Table 10b: Current Family Size by Proportion of Family Income Contributed by Wife: Percentage Distributions

Wife's Contribution		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Contribution Nil		16.2	56.1	27.7	173
Contribution below 50%		13.9	38.8	47.2	36
Contribution above 50%		34.1	37.4	28.6	91
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Even in caste-group IV, comprising the same low castes as group V, less than half the wives are earning outside the household. (Not that there is any reason why housework should be excluded from the social definition of production, cf.E. Jelin, in Anker, Buvinic and Youssef,1982). D'Souza suggests that two contradictory trends exist in women's work-force participation in India: Firstly, at lower prestige levels of husband's occupations the rate of work participation by wives goes on diminishing with increase in occupational prestige, and secondly, at higher prestige levels the rate goes on increasing with the increase of occupational prestige. But, he adds,

> 'So long as only the man in the family is working there is no ambiguity about the status of different members of the family. If the wife is also working, this raises problems for family status consistency For consistency the wife should follow an occupation which is...equal in prestige to the husband's or slightly inferior to it. If the wife is not able to fulfil this condition she does not participate in work' (D'Souza, 1975, p.136).

By the time of the Chamarajanagar survey, which ended in 1980, it looked as if soaring inflation was fast putting paid to quibbles about status consistency when the wife's job was the more prestigious. In the few cases where the wife's job was better paid, the husband's attitude was compounded of pride in her ability and somewhat dazed relief that <u>someone</u> was going to be able to pay for the children's education.

The Chamarajanagar survey showed that the highest percentages of those wives whose contribution was 50% or over occurred in groups V and VI, those with the second highest, and the lowest, number of children respectively. Clearly there are ambiguities here, and it should be emphasised that on the plantations where the majority of group V respondents worked equal pay with men had just been granted in the first year of the survey. Before 1979 the financial contribution of wives in group V, although a little higher

than that of group IV (mostly agricultural labourers where women get half the male pay for the same work), was still well under 50%. Table 10 is therefore rather misleading because the effects of equal pay on the fertility of group V cannot yet be judged, and for this group the relationship is not valid. But the findings of - among others - Promilla Kapur (Kapur 1970), Esther Boserup (Boserup 1975) and the contributors to Kupinsky's symposium (Kupinsky,1977), disclose, as we have seen, that where the status of women is already low their ability to contribute to the family income is not necessarily advantageous to them in terms of prestige. It does not therefore follow automatically that equal pay will give group V wives greater control over their own fertility, though higher pay might well do so. Equal pay is however likely to diminish fertility in this group simply because husbands may decide that it is advantageous to both spouses for the wife to go on earning a wage which compares so well with the agricultural pittance. It would be interesting to observe the result in five year's time. When Kupinsky wrote that equalisation of male and female job opportunities and rewards are likely to be associated with low levels of fertility, he was referring to American women (Kupinsky,1977). M.N. Srinivas reminds us that 'Female labour is the rule in the lower classes and castes but paradoxically it is these working women who have a higher fertility' (Srinivas,1977, p.15). From this we may deduce, as he indicates, that where a woman's employment is unskilled and requires no education it does not have a significant effect in lowering fertility. Presumably this is partly because their children have cost little in education terms and had a high utility value in economic/security terms, and partly because of ignorance or fear of contraceptive practices.

In the case of group VI, the Sholigas, the situation is different. The women's contribution in a traditional hunter-gatherer's non-market economy (such as that of this tribe until fairly recently) is of equal importance.

Apart from the tree-climbing involved in the collection of honey from wild bees, which is only undertaken by the men, Sholigas of both sexes gather forest produce, cultivate, and slaughter animals trapped in pits or by other means, and, today, both sexes earn equal pay picking coffee on the estates when the crop is ripe or collecting lichen and other jungle products for the Forestry Department. In her Women and Men Ernestine Friedl claims that where women's contribution is equal to or greater than that of their husbands their status is high and relations between the sexes is relatively tension-free. (Friedl, 1975). There is no reason to suppose that relations between Sholiga women and men are unusually tension-free, but intra-tribe behavioural transactions seem to operate according to a recognition of and respect for the autonomy of the individual of either sex. It is not just a question of Sholiga women not being easily coerced but rather that Sholiga society is individualistic.

Nancy Birdsell and Helen Ware both imply that reduced fertility may be expected (a) where the rewards for female labour are not lower than those for male labour, (b) where the status of employment is high, (c) where the economic value of children is low (Birdsell, 1976, Ware in Kupinsky, 1977). The first two requirements are filled in the Sholiga case, since they are perfectly satisfied with the status of their traditional work, which hardly differs from that of their men-folk. The third is not, since Sholiga children start helping their parents relatively early. Further conditions must therefore be considered in this context and perhaps one is that it is impossible to scramble up trees and through undergrowth carrying bundles of fruit or tubers with babies and small children on the hip and at the knee. One Sholiga wife put it succinctly: "It is more difficult to work if you are pregnant". Nor is it possible to leave an infant in the jungle while gathering, as it would be to leave it in a shady corner of a

field/

Even today the jungle is a dangerous place for someone accompanied by toddlers or infants. Being unarmed, one has to be ready to run. It seems likely that Sholiga fertility has always been fairly low with long birth intervals because of the nature of the work the women do. Both the women and the men frequently mention the dangers of their daily forays into the jungle, and from my own experience I would say that they are far from overstating the case. But the forays are necessary since they bring in food, they are also undertaken in the worker's own time, and though they may be tough the conditions are not unpleasant. On the contrary, they offer a good deal of freedom. The gatherer is self-employed, and chooses whether or not to work that day. One begins to see how the work of tribal women is quite compatible with low fertility. And lastly, an important point to be borne in mind here is the necessity to distinguish between two factors, that of women working because a large family means large consumption needs and that of women having fewer children because they are working. Thus the patterns of work by women in caste-groups II, IV and V at least, as reflected in the Chamarajanagar survey, may have been due either to the wives having worked all their lives or in some cases due to their past reproductive output.

4: Female Autonomy

'Work for women is not a panacea for the world population explosion,' writes Stanley Kupinsky,

> 'but viewed in the context of an increase in the status and educational opportunities for women, declining family size norms, the development of a self-concept as worker whose economic activity makes an important contribution to society, the worker role for women may yet prove to be an important element, lowering fertility in an industrialising society or maintaining the existing level in a more developed economy' (Kupinsky, 1977, p.380).

A.K. Jain approaches the issue of fertility from another direction when he suggests that:

> 'Advancement in female education can be expected to influence fertility behaviour even without simultaneous changes in other factors such as increasing scope for participating in the paid labour force in the modern sector' (Jain, 1981, p.594).

The two authors are not really contradicting each other, Both education and well-paid work - which involves specialised training - give women a chance of independence, the autonomy which Dyson cites as an immensely important factor in the reduction of fertility. As Mandelbaum says, 'An educated woman is usually less closely confined, physically and psychologically' (Mandelbaum, 1974, p.54). Caldwell noted in his study area in Karnataka that husbands treated wives who had been to school differently and listened to them more (Caldwell, 1982). This statement may be qualified by the addition that in Chamarajanagar at least (except in the case of the Sholigas) the schooling would have to be of a fairly high level, SSLC or above, the wife's economic contribution equal to his, or the wife to have a very strong personality, for the husband to be decisively influenced by her. When one or more of these requisites are present he might well listen to her, or she might go ahead and make unilateral decisions. We have seen that this occurs in the case of Sholiga women. An illustration of the same situation with a high caste couple is the case of the son in an orthodox joint family recently married to a graduate wife with an earning capacity far above his. At the same time as he was confiding to an interviewer that he wanted three children she was announcing firmly that she intended to have a tubectomy after her second child whether her spouse liked it or not.

Status is an amorphous concept with many and various indices, no single one of which is adequate to

convey its totality. The relative restriction of wives in Chamarajanagar has been employed as one useful pointer, with the qualification that taken alone it is not necessarily a basis for fertility behaviour. Table 11 contrasts restricted with unrestricted wives. Those who do not have to ask permission to go out but may come and go at will have a lower percentage of C(4-8) families and a higher percentage od A (0-1) families. But the differential between B (2-3) and C (4-8) families is greater among those who have to be accompanied by a chaperone in the form of spouse, brother or mother-in-law, so the result is rather inconclusive. Basically it brackets Sholiga wives and the few modernised and Westernised wives in the area, the low reproduction groups, along with those low caste wives, the high reproduction groups, who walk abroad unaccompanied, whether at will or by necessity. The main point of interest in this table is that all Sholiga wives except two said they were free to come and go at will. The two who said they must ask first explained that it was not safe to go unaccompanied into the jungle because of the danger from wild animals and snakes, which is quite true. This table also stresses the contrast between 'sanskritised' and 'unsanskritised' women. In the latter group, the majority of the wives were unrestricted. The wives in group III seem to suffer the least restriction of the 'sanskritised' category, probably on account of the larger number of relatively Westernised couples in this group.

Freedom of movement alone is not therefore a direct determinant of fertility. As with so many of the variables we have considered (including the important factor of education, since the illiterate tribe has the fewest children), it needs to be considered as part of a sum or corpus, which I have designated 'the autonomy package'. An important component of female autonomy in developed countries is the right of choice as to marriage partner, or indeed between marriage and less formal unions. In Chamarajanagar,

Table 11: Current Family Size by Caste by Restriction of Wife: Percentage Distributions

Restriction of Wife by Caste-group		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
I	Restricted	10.7	50.0	39.3	28
	Not Restricted	22.7	63.6	13.6	22
II	Restricted	15.6	53.1	31.3	32
	Not Restricted	16.7	72.2	11.1	18
III	Restricted	20.0	70.0	10.0	20
	Not Restricted	13.3	50.0	36.7	30
IV	Restricted	22.2	22.2	55.6	9
	Not Restricted	17.1	46.3	36.6	41
V	Restricted	25.0	25.0	50.0	4
	Not Restricted	19.6	39.1	41.3	46
VI	Restricted	50.0	50.0	0.0	2
	Not Restricted	41.7	35.4	22.9	48
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 11a: Restriction of Wife by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Restriction of Wife		
		Not Restricted %	Restricted %	Total N (=100%)
I		42.0	58.0	50
II		32.0	68.0	50
III		56.0	44.0	50
IV		76.0	24.0	50
V		74.0	26.0	50
VI		96.0	4.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	188	112	300
	%	62.7	37.3	

as in the rest of India, most girls except those of the most sophisticated, 'modernised' or Westernised classes, have their husbands chosen for them by parents or other relatives (married sisters are leading protagonists in match-making in south Karnataka), and in the high castes all too frequently do not meet them until the wedding day, except when they marry close kin (as they do in the South but never among Hindus and Sikhs in the North). Young men also have their brides chosen for them, but with a stronger right of veto and a better chance of viewing their future brides in advance, if only from a distance. It seems (cf.Thurston,1909) that Upuliga girls have traditionally had the right of veto, but the prerogatives of girls in the Sholiga tribe, as with a large proportion of all the other hill tribes, are very different. Asked whether they believed in freedom of marital choice, 90% of Sholiga wives replied that they already had that freedom. A number of them added that who they chose to wed was no business of anybody else. Traditional Sholiga marriage consists of what M.N. Srinivas has described as 'ratified elopement'. The young couple take to the jungle together for a few days before returning to the parental household of either the boy or the girl. There they undergo a token scolding, followed traditionally by a feast given by the boy's kin to the local community, which seals the arrangement. Another form of Sholiga marriage consists in the putative bridegroom staying for a few months in the household of his prospective parents-in-law and working for them. If the girl approves of him the young couple sleep together, and if he conducts himself as a desirable member of the family the union is later solemnised by a feast. As to the 10% of Sholiga wives who said they thought marriages should be arranged, it can only be assumed that their daughters had made disastrous marriages and that they thought parental advice would not come amiss. Marriage by arrangement does occur sometimes among Sholigas who are losing

their traditional culture (although the girl can always refuse). In such arranged marriages, the bridegroom and his family bring gifts, thera, to the bride and her kin; but 'ratified elopement' is still the most common form of marriage for the tribe. Sholigas say that this is because the god of the hills, Rangaswamy, eloped with a Sholiga girl in the mythological past, and is thus their brother-in-law.

This chapter has at least provided evidence to show that in the case of caste-group VI women's autonomy and low fertility are closely associated. However it is doubtful whether Sholigas trouble themselves much with abstract questions of the relative status of male and female. When asked for their opinion on equal rights for women some Sholiga wives did not appear to understand the question, which seemed to them absurd. It required re-defining in terms of what they had the right to do. It should be emphasised once more that the impression one receives when talking to members of the tribe is that there is a basic acceptance of individual self-determination which results in independent decision-making on the part of both sexes and thus of both partners within a marriage. Again and again in the course of the survey we found that Sholiga husbands were as much at a loss to control or even to explain their wives' choice of action as the wives were to control or explain their husbands'. Both sexes on the whole appear to accept the vagaries of the other without much surprise, though often with considerable annoyance. This is not to say that Sholiga social sanctions are not strong where they do apply - for instance where incest is involved or stealing from other Sholigas - but that they simply allow latitude to both sexes in areas where in other castes latitude is only allowed to the male sex.

Tables 6 to 9a have certainly given us reason to believe that education, especially higher education for women, along with 'modernisation' or Westernisation, have

a decided effect on fertility reduction in Chamarajanagar. But, as we have seen, Caste-group VI are neither educated nor modernised. Neither are they urbanised, and their economic status is low. Most of the variables examined so far do not, then, apply to this group, and in explaining the validation of the first premise of the introductory hypothesis a different set of factors, 'the autonomy package' must be predicated in view of the fact that these people have the lowest fertility of all. It will be recalled that while the hypothesis stated at the start of this thesis proposed that education could influence fertility in all castes, its central postulate was that where women were able to control their own fertility because of their relative independence, their fertility would be reduced.

Apart from the few graduate wives in caste-group III the tribal wives of caste-group VI turn out to be the only group in Chamarajanagar to fit into such a category. Without education, (but with equal work-force participation and equal rewards for their labour), they none the less possess the autonomy which Ashok Mitra (1978, 1980) and Dyson and Moore (1983) all regard as the single most important determinant of reduced fertility. The graduate wives among group III, all of whom had small families, all regarded themselves as the equals of their husbands. "Why should women be regarded as inferior ?". "We must prove ourselves". "Women should stand on their own feet", (a female doctor). "The purpose of marriage is not slavery to one's husband but a happy partnership", (A female social worker). Sholiga women seemed to take their situation more for granted, and to be positively smug about it. "Because we are in the jungle we help each other in all our work. We earn equally, so we have equality". "We don't rely on men to keep us but work equally with them. Why shouldn't we have equal status ?" "We tribal people have very independent natures. Women share the family burdens with men, so why should we think ourselves inferior ?" "We people go together to the forest, so we have

equality/"

Education and extra-familial economic activity (if well-paid and status-enhancing) are then other routes to the self-respect and independence which Sholiga women have traditionally possessed, possibly through their traditional equal economic contribution. The most highly educated women in our sample shared with the illiterate tribal women the twin attributes of a relative independence conducive of self-respect and self-sufficiency, and low fertility. It seems therefore, as Esther Boserup urged in 1970, echoed by Ashok Mitra in 1980, that girls and women need to be provided with the means (other than of rearing a large family) of achieving self-sufficiency and asserting themselves in their social environment. This being so, a question now arises: how, then, can the comparatively low fertility of the more restricted and orthodox wives of caste-group II be construed ? The explanation of this phenomenon lies, I believe, in another and different 'package' subserving low fertility, which will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC STATUS AS DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY

1: Education in General

It will be recalled from the discussion in the chapter on Caste (Section One, ch.II), that education per se is highly esteemed in Chamarajanagar and throughout south Karnataka. As a collateral therefore to the testimony in the previous chapter as to the cardinal importance of education for wives, it should not be forgotten that education also plays no small part in the influencing of husbands' fertility behaviour. Educated men tend to want educated wives. They certainly want educated sons and, to a lesser extent, educated daughters. Caldwell argues that the primary determinant of the timing of fertility transition is the effect of mass education on the family economy:

> 'The direction of the wealth flow between generations is changed through the introduction of mass education, at least partly because the relationship between members of the family are transformed as the morality governing these relationships changes.' (Caldwell, 1980, p.225).

It may be remembered from the Introduction to this thesis that he cites a number of mechanisms by which education in general has an effect on fertility. The first three are economic: the reduction of children's work potential, increased cost of their upbringing and the delayed returns owing to their prolonged dependency. The rest embrace shifts of attitudes: the cultural changes brought about by the introduction of Western middle-class values, including a closer relationship between husband and wife. When the husband is educated, he is more likely to support his wife in withstanding the pressures to keep on having children, if only because the cost of educating them in the hope of securing the white-collar permanent town jobs to which the literate aspire is prohibitive.

The reason most often cited by all Chamarajanagar caste-groups for preferring small families was the cost of bringing up children, most often expressed in the three high caste groups in terms of the cost of educating them. For instance, a civil servant in group III (Other High Castes) who was planning to have a vasectomy shortly and whose wife was using an IUD said that they wanted to concentrate on giving their one child, a girl, "the best possible education", and a Rich Lingayat who had had a vasectomy after two children, accepted sterilisation "so as to educate them properly". A grain merchant with three children whose wife had had a tubectomy said: "If we had had more, we could not have afforded to send them to university". A Poor Lingayat tradesman said his wife had agreed to a tubectomy "Because of the cost of education and weddings". These people and many others had reached the same conclusion as those 'Kannadigas' cited by Caldwell who found that 'during the process of education a small or medium sized family suffered less than a large family' (Caldwell,1982,p.25).

Many of the low castes also hoped to, or at least wished to, educate their children, in most cases motivated by the possibility of that universal objective, the Government job. One Harijan said, touchingly, that he wanted to educate his son and daughter "So that they won't be like us". But a number of 'unsanskritised' respondents were less starry-eyed on the subject. An Upuliga said shrewdly that school was a waste of time and money unless the scholar achieved SSLC or graduation, because anything less would be insufficient qualification for a decent job. A very intelligent Harijan was bitterly disillusioned about the outcome of education for the poor: "What good does it do to them ? It only makes them want things they can't afford". And Sholigas almost unanimously claimed that education was not necessary in their

community. "What good will it do for us when we live in the jungle ? We don't need it".

Education, at least for the male and the higher castes, seems to have been much valued in India since the Vedic period, possibly because, like purity, it was once the unique and distinguishing property of the Brahman. It is only recently, due to Government policy of protective legislation on behalf of the Scheduled Castes that members of the low castes have had any chance of achieving education without first achieving wealth. Table 12 shows, not surprisingly, that nearly all the graduate husbands belonged to the two well off caste-groups, I and III. Caste-group IV boasted of three graduates, almost certainly owing their position to the Government's protective legislation. The figures for those with little or no education, are also quite predictable, but those for husbands with Secondary Education are interesting in that they have a bearing on a point to be discussed in part 3 below, the special case of caste-group II. Here we see that although Table 12 shows that Poor Lingayats (group II), have as a group the worst academic achievement of the three high caste groups, nevertheless more than half of them have had a secondary education (even if by no means all have reached SSLC), and far more in this group have secondary education than in any of the three 'unsanskritised' groups. The 'secondary' category of course only covers those who go no further than the secondary level of schooling, which is why fewer of the well off groups attained this level. Lingayats, as a caste, (or a sect) set great store by education, perhaps in emulation of or competition with the Brahmans with whom they claim equality of status.

We see in Table 12a that the graduates have the lowest percentage of large families and the highest percentage of B (2-3 children) families. The effect of secondary education alone on fertility is doubtful. According to a number of studies carried out in India (Mysore Population Study 1951, Driver 1963, Cassen 1978), the effect of male education in

Table 12: Husbands' Education by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Husband's Educational Attainment			
		None or Primary %	Secondary %	Graduate %	Total (=100%)
I		18.0	48.0	34.0	50
II		48.0	52.0	0.0	50
III		20.0	50.0	30.0	50
IV		76.0	18.0	6.0	50
V		98.0	2.0	0.0	50
VI		100.0	0.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	180	85	35	300
	%	60.0	28.3	11.7	

Table 12a: Current Family Size by Caste by Husband's Education: Percentage Distributions

Husband's Education by Caste-group		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total N (=100%)
I	None or Primary	11.1	33.3	55.6	9
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	17.0	60.9	21.9	41
II	None or Primary	12.5	62.5	25.0	24
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	19.2	57.7	23.1	26
III	None or Primary	10.0	50.0	40.0	10
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	17.5	60.0	22.5	40
IV	None or Primary	21.1	44.7	34.2	38
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	8.3	33.3	58.3	12
V	None or Primary	20.4	36.7	42.9	49
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	0.0	100.0	0.0	1
VI	None or Primary	42.0	36.0	22.0	50
	Secondary/PUC/Graduate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 12b: Current Family Size by Husband's Education: Percentage Distributions

Husband's Education		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
None or Primary		24.4	42.2	33.3	180
Secondary/PUC		16.5	54.1	29.4	85
Graduate		17.1	65.7	17.1	35
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

depressing fertility is only significant in the case of higher education. On the other hand secondary education does lead to raised expectations, especially for the next generation. As Driver pointed out, clerical workers seem to have lower fertility than either cultivators or those in better-paid occupations.

2: Economic Status

In the past, whatever wives may have suffered through unrestricted child-bearing, it made good economic sense (if we are to believe Chamarajanagar informants),to have a reasonably large family of which all the sons and, in the low castes, the unmarried daughters, dutifully contributed to the household income pool. This was true of all castes and classes. Today, the shrinking of landholdings (cf. my chapter I, Part One), due to the survival of sons and subsequent fragmentation as much as to Government edicts, has led to a surplus of farm labour. The cost of living has soared. More and more families rest their hopes on the attainment of town jobs for at least one of their sons and town-employed husbands for their daughters, because it is in the towns that the labour market has expanded, and the income from outside jobs is a valued supplement to the family income from land or labour on the land. Unfortunately not only does the standard of education required for such jobs represent an economic burden on the family but also in many cases a large bribe is a prereqisite to the acquisition of one for which the applicant is qualified. The scale of these bribes seemed to be common knowledge among Chamarajanagar students.

To realise family ambitions for the rising generation the sons - and,increasingly among the educated, the daughters - have to undergo a long and expensive period of processing, which in its later stages begins to inculcate a different culture. As Caldwell says of his study area in Karnataka, 'It is generally agreed that

schooling teaches another message, an 'English' one' (Caldwell,1982, p.20). A part of this message is that educated men require educated wives as partners and companions. Another part of it is that educated daughters--in-law are capable of and prone to insist on, bringing up the number of children they think fit without the advice and coercion of mothers-in-law. Yet others are that the husband is not a god and the word of the paterfamilias is not necessarily law. Rural fathers stand slightly in awe of sophisticated and independent daughters--in-law. The whole concept of the corporate integrated family or even lineage working as a team under an authoritarian patriarch is breaking down rapidly, to the constant reiteration, in Chamarajanagar, of the refrain "small family, less expense". In view of which the time is ripe for the message of the family planning programme to be heeded, and it is evident that, in our area at least, this has begun to happen. 'The number of children that a family can usefully absorb on its farm depends on the size of the holding', observes M.N. Srinivas (Srinivas 1977, p.17). Referring to Mamdani's assertion that a farmer accepting family planning is courting economic disaster (Mamdani, op. cit. 1973), he goes on to argue that it is only if work is available that every child can turn out to be a net asset. How then does size of landholding affect fertility in Chamarajanagar ? Tables 13a and 13b reveal that those with the largest landholdings had the lowest percentage of large families and the highest percentage of B (2-3 children) families. As at least two modern Indian studies (Srinivas 1977 and Mahadevan 1979) have emphasised, the scope for expansion of landed property is limited in India today, both by the Land Ceiling laws and by pressure on the land. Inheritance in Indian tradition takes no account of primogeniture and land can be owned individually as well as corporately by the lineage or lineage segment. Thus the reproduction of a large number of children, especially sons, will lead to

Table 13: Landholding by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Landholding in Acres			
		Little or None %	Small/Medium (2-10 acres) %	Large (11-20+ acres) %	Total (=100%)
I		34.0	30.0	36.0	50
II		54.0	46.0	0.0	50
III		40.0	40.0	20.0	50
IV		62.0	36.0	2.0	50
V		80.0	20.0	0.0	50
VI		62.0	38.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	166	105	29	300
	%	55.3	35.0	9.6	

Table 13a: Current Family Size by Landholding in Acres: Percentage Distributions

Landholding		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Little or no Land		21.7	47.0	31.3	166
Small to Medium Holdings		21.0	47.5	31.4	105
Large Holdings		20.7	58.6	20.7	29
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 13b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Landholding

Caste-group	Landholding			
	Little or none	Small to medium	Large	All Landholdings
I	2.6	3.3	3.1	3.0
II	2.9	2.7	-	2.8
III	2.9	3.3	2.1	2.9
IV	3.0	3.3	5.0*	3.1
V	3.2	2.7	-	3.1
VI	2.2	2.3	-	2.2
All Caste-groups	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9

Notes: - No cases
* Only one case

Landholdings: Little or none = less than 2 acres;
Small to medium = 2 to 10 acres;
Large = 11 acres or more.

partitioning of land, increasing fragmentation and a resulting diminishment of family prestige. (Equally, many daughters can also lead to impoverishment, as 'big men' are expected to provide grand weddings and magnificent jewellry for their daughters. Furthermore, with reciprocal gift-giving, the weddings of sons cost big landowners in the south a pretty penny as well).

In Chamarajanagar in the nineteen-fifties the average landholding was eight acres, while today it is two acres (Land Registry figures, Chamarajanagar 1981). It is hard to say whether this is entirely due to population growth and subsequent fragmentation or whether it may partly reflect a more equitable distribution of land, but probably it is a combination of both, to say nothing of the possibility of the current units being at least partly a result of nominal re-distribution among the family of large estates as a result of land-ceiling laws. Certainly enough tenants have succeeded in their claims to possession of land they previously cultivated on various types of tenure contract to make tenancy rare in Chamarajanagar today.

One would suppose that those with smaller holdings would be as anxious to reduce fragmentation (and therefore to reduce fertility), as those with more extensive lands, but the fact that those with two to ten acres had a higher percentage of large families can be explained by 'ethnographic residual analysis', as G.Fry has it (Fry 1981). People in Chamarajanagar say that six well-cultivated and irrigated acres will just about support a smallish family which employs labour. Below that acreage a holding would only be viable if the family owning it supplied its own labour. Since the high castes will not do manual work if they can help it (although Poor Lingayat Gowdas with their Cultivator tradition do undertake it), this means that most of the low-acreage holdings are owned by low castes who have no status to lose and who all work together and whose children may also all work together on the family plot. Fragmentation still occurs, but not so fast, and there is a limit

beyond which a plot is too small to be of any use at all.

When landholding was controlled by education it became clear that since is the well-off who can afford education and the educated who have fewer children, (leaving the Sholigas out of this equation), the relationship between landholding and family size is fairly indirect. It should also be mentioned here that the category 'Little or None' of the landholding tables is somewhat misleading because many affluent people in Chamarajanagar do not own land, preferring to invest in house property, cinemas or mills to avoid the farmer's perennial anxiety about the coming of the rain, or irrigation problems.

Neither do Tables 14, 14a or 14b do much to illuminate the possible relationship between economic status alone, as denoted by the type of housing in which the couples interviewed lived, and fertility. For instance, the fact that the dwellings of the poor showed the highest percentage of small families is obviously due to the inclusion of Sholiga's huts in this bracket. In fact, before Table 14a was collapsed, the highest proportion for family size in almost every one of the ten categories of dwelling was three children. The exceptions were the Sholigas' grass huts, where the highest proportion was one child, and the traditional tiled village house, typical dwelling of the poorer Lingayat, where the highest percentage was two children. However, the first category, the houses of the well-off in the collapsed Table shown here, does show a higher percentage of B families and a lower percentage of C families than occurs in the second category, the lower-income housing. It may be noted that only the tiny cluster of educated low castes in good jobs in group IV owned 1st. Class houses. By the same token no member of caste-group I, the Rich Lingayats, lived in 3rd. Class houses, which is hardly surprising, but three members of group III did so. These were poor Banajigas, high caste and orthodox but indigent members of that large and respected merchant caste of Chamarajanagar. The low castes do not have a monopoly of poverty in the area, though the reverse

Table 14: Dwelling Grade by Caste-group: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Dwelling Grade			
		1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class	Total (=100%)
I		60.0	40.0	0.0	50
II		2.0	48.0	50.0	50
III		60.0	32.0	8.0	50
IV		8.0	20.0	72.0	50
V		0.0	0.0	100.0	50
VI		0.0	0.0	100.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	65	70	165	300
	%	21.6	23.3	55.0	

Key

1st Class = Modern, mod. cons.; large traditional; large transitional.

2nd Class = Traditional village houses; peasant farmer's dwellings; lower middle class town dwellings, few mod. cons.

3rd Class = Rural or urban slum dwellings; Sholiga forest huts.

Table 14a: Current Family Size by Dwelling Grade: Percentage Distributions

Dwelling Grade		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Modern, mod. cons. Large traditional Large transitional		15.4	63.1	21.5	65
Traditional village house Peasant farmer's dwellings Lower middle class town dwellings Few mod. cons.		12.9	50.0	37.1	70
Rural or urban slum dwellings Sholiga forest huts		27.3	41.5	30.9	165
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 14b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Dwelling Grade

Caste-group	Dwelling Grade			
	1	2	3	Total
I	2.8	3.3	-	3.0
II	4.0*	3.0	2.6	2.8
III	2.4	3.3	4.5	2.9
IV	4.3	3.6	2.9	3.1
V	-	-	3.1	3.1
VI	-	-	2.2	2.2
Total	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.9

Note:

1 = 1st Class: Modern, mod. cons.; large traditional, large transitional.

2 = 2nd Class: Traditional village houses; peasant farmer's dwellings; lower middle class town dwellings, few mod. cons.

3 = 3rd Class: Rural or urban slum dwellings; Sholiga forest huts.

*Only one case

situation, the higher castes having the monopoly of wealth, was more or less the rule until fairly recently.

Tables 15, 15a and 15b are yet another ambiguous index of economic status. They show that the highest percentage of C families (the crucial dichotomy) occurs in the high-income bracket. But we know from Table 1 that the highest percentage of B families was found in group II, the Poor Lingayats, who had the second lowest number of children per group. We also know that Sholigas had the highest percentage of one-child families and Table 15 and 15b show that no Sholigas at all were in top jobs. But the collapsing of the tables to avoid peering at a lengthy printout has concealed one significant point. While Sholigas did have the highest percentage of one-child families, professional, executive and academic people had more cases of two-child families within their group than any other family size. All the rest had more three-child families than any other family size. So while it seems that any relationship between economic status alone and family size is either spurious or at least indirect, it is prognostic when combined with intervening variables.

One of these is the influence of Westernisation acquired through the educational, or higher educational process for which high economic status is for most groups a pre-condition. Tables 16, 16a and 16b introduce one index of Westernisation. In spite of the fact that it is also an index of economic status, ownership of electric consumer durables is an indication of attitude. Clearly those who possess such goods must be well-to-do in India. But in a traditional area like Chamarajanagar many rich families - perhaps the majority of them - see no reason to spend money on modern gadgets when there is a flock of restricted wives in the joint-family or any number of servants to share out the work. Those with electric gadgets are mostly the 'new élite' who, as described in chapter I, Part One, live in new modern houses, more often than not in nuclear households; and the husbands who build, buy or rent such houses for their families and embellish them with modern goods tend to be those whose values have become comparat-

Table 15: Husband's Job by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Husband's Job					
		High income/ Prestige %	Low Income %	Large Farmer %	Smallholder %	Low pay/ Prestige %	Total (=100%)
I		46.0	26.0	8.0	16.0	4.0	50
II		2.0	42.0	.0	44.0	12.0	50
III		30.0	32.0	2.0	10.0	26.0	50
IV		6.0	18.0	.0	22.0	54.0	50
V		.0	2.0	.0	.0	98.0	50
VI		.0	.0	.0	.0	100.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	42	60	5	46	147	300
	%	14.0	20.0	1.7	15.3	49.0	

Table 15a: Current Family Size by Husband's Job: Percentage Distributions

Husband's Job		Current Family Size			
		A %	B %	C %	Total (=100%)
High-income job, large landowner, large merchant, manufacturer		10.6	66.0	23.4	47
Low-income job, small trader, smallholder		20.8	50.0	29.2	106
Manual labour job, forest hunting-gathering		25.2	41.5	33.3	147
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 15b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Husband's Occupation

Caste-group	Husband's occupation			
	1	2	3	All Occupations
I	2.5	3.3	5.5	2.8
II	6.0*	2.7	2.7	2.9
III	2.6	2.6	3.6	2.9
IV	4.0	3.1	3.1	3.1
V	-	0.0*	3.2	3.1
VI	-	-	2.2	2.2
All Caste-groups	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.9

Notes: - No cases
* One case

Husband's occupation: Group 1 = High-income jobs, large landowners, merchants and manufacturers.

Group 2 = Low-income jobs, smallholders, small traders.

Group 3 = Manual labourers, forest gatherers.

Table 16: Ownership of Modern Household Gadgets by caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Ownership of Modern Gadgets		
		No Gadgets %	Gadgets %	Total (=100%)
I		48.0	52.0	50
II		100.0	0.0	50
III		54.0	46.0	50
IV		94.0	6.0	50
V		100.0	0.0	50
VI		100.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	248	52	300
	%	82.7	17.3	

Table 16a: Current Family Size by Ownership of Modern Gadgets: Percentage Distributions

Ownership of Modern Gadgets		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Modern gadgets		13.5	65.4	21.2	52
No modern gadgets		23.0	44.8	32.3	248
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 16b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Ownership of Modern Gadgets

Caste-group	Ownership of Modern Gadgets		
	None	Some	Total
I	3.2	2.8	3.0
II	2.8	-	2.8
III	3.2	2.5	2.9
IV	3.1	3.7	3.1
V	3.1	-	3.1
VI	2.2	-	2.2
All Caste-groups	2.9	2.7	2.9

comparatively Westernised, and who have opted for the 'modern' path to prestige and high status. The type of goods on which this assessment was based were refrigerator, electric cooker, electric iron, grinder, table and ceiling fans. In those two caste-groups where a significant number replied 'yes' to the query as to whether they possessed these objects there is a strong relationship between the ownership of modern household gadgets and small/medium families. There were only 21% of C families to 65% of B families in the 'Yes' category, compared with 32% of C famiies to 44.3% of B families in the 'No' category. Table 16b shows, however, that in the cases of the couples in group IV who owned luxury gadgets the relationship goes the other way. It is not known whether they had already produced their families before they 'arrived' at riches, or whether perhaps new-found security encouraged them to have another child or two.

3: Raised Expectations and Fertility

Little or none of the foregoing economic comparisons throw much light on the question of why caste-group II, the Poor Lingayats, had the lowest fertility after the Sholigas. One possible answer may lie in an Indian parallel to the 'Easterlin Hypothesis' which predicts that a couple's economic status relative to their aspirations can determine their fertility behaviour (Easterlin 1968, quoted by Ermisch 1979). Although the Poor Lingayats were on average the most conventional in some respects of all the groups in my sample, which would lead one to expect them to have higher fertility as a corollary, they actually had a higher percentage of sterilisations than their better-off brethren of group I, and the second highest percentage of wives using IUD. In their replies to interviewers, respondents from this group constantly reiterated their desire for few children, not only because "We are only earning enough to support a small family", (many Poor Lingayat wives have to work for the family to survive), but

because "We want to educate the children properly", or "If we have more children we can't give them a good education". These observations reflect the pressures of poverty in a group with higher aspirations and expectations than income. As a sect and as a caste Lingayats in general have a reputation for being concerned with education, as have the Brahmans with whom they claim equality, and group II had the third highest level of education in our six communities. It also occupied the third level of economic status, 50% of its members living above the poverty line as denoted by jobs and housing. Of those members of group II who had accepted sterilisation of one or other spouse, 30% of the husbands had been educated to secondary school level, compared with the 18% who got no further than primary. (But only 18% of the wives in this group, sterilised or unsterilised, had achieved some sort of secondary education compared to 82% of the husbands). It seems as if the 'favourable' family planning performance of this conservative group may also be explained by use of the concept of 'relative deprivation' (Merton and Lazarfield 1950). Here are men with more education than the low castes, (with the exception of those few successful social climbers from group IV), and greater expectations of life in consequence. It seems more than probable that they were the group which felt the most threatened by inflation, leading to a decision by the husbands to limit the size of their families. As we shall see in the next chapter, 94% of Poor Lingayat husbands and 90% of their wives cited the cost of living as their reason. The remark of one smallholder in this group illustrates their general attitude: "My education ceased at lower secondary because of poverty. I want my son to be a graduate to ease his father's difficulties".

CHAPTER X ALTERNATIVE DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY

1: Early-Age Mortality

Infant and Child mortality rates in south Karnataka have gradually declined over the past forty years from about 230 to about 100 per thousand. (Caldwell 1982, p.15). This improvement may be attributed partly to the fact that modern medicine in both its preventive and healing aspects has penetrated into rural areas, averting epidemics and curing diseases once regarded as generally fatal, and partly to the progress of secularisation. More and more couples bring their seriously ill children to health centres and private doctors, (the girls more often to the former and the boys to the latter, since the survival of sons is on the whole regarded as the better investment), instead of ascribing the illness to divine or demonic intervention.

Many demographers agree with D.G. Mandelbaum that:

> 'Women of lower and poorer groups tend to bear more children, in part because more of their children die in infancy and so these women have shorter lactation...periods before becoming fecund again, and in part because they need more children to replace those they lose' (Mandelbaum 1974,p.41).

Indeed this is one of the principal tenets of Notesteinian demographic transition theory, in regard to the pre-transition state. 'the higher the infant mortality', Mandelbaum says:

> 'the more offspring are produced, but for couples who follow patterns of lower fertility, whether through traditional controls or modern ones, low infant mortality helps to assure them that their children have a good chance of surviving, and so they need not try for additional births as an insurance' (Mandelbaum,op.cit. 1974 p.49)

S. Chandrasekhar had reached the same conclusion two years previously. High infant mortality, he points out, leads to short birth intervals.

> 'Most parents would have fewer children if there were an assurance that the children would survive...There is no question but that improved infant and child nutrition will provide in the long run one of the most effective means of lowering the birth rate in the developing countries.' (Chandrasekhar 1972,p.233).

Susan Scrimshaw, on the other hand, reverses cause and effect,suggesting that high fertility may lead to higher mortality through intentional or unintentional neglect of children (Scrimshaw 1978).

T.R. Balakrishnan's analysis of the effects of child mortality on fertility in Latin American countries is another study which does not appear to support conventional theory in its entirety. He came to the conclusion that in these populations, all with high fertility and low contraceptive use, the number of births was largely a function of exposure to risk rather than of fear of child mortality (Balakrishnan 1978). Nevertheless, since the women must become fecund at shorter intervals than if their children survived, his findings only partially negate those of Chandrasekhar, Mandelbaum and others.

It is true that the likelihood of losing children was seldom given by Chamarajanagar respondents as a reason for having large families, although it was sometimes expressed in a different form when a desire for a second son was mentioned. "If one dies, the other may survive". Caldwell also remarks that there was no great fear of child loss in his field area of Karnataka, apart from an acceptance of the possibility that an only boy may die leaving the couple without sons (Caldwell 1982). It cannot be denied that Chamarajanagar informants were perfectly well aware that while bubonic plague, smallpox, cholera and malaria were endemic in the taluk up to the end of the nineteen-fifties, the first two of these

diseases have now been virtually eradicated, and though malaria has made a come-back, cholera occurs less often and is more easily controlled and cured than in the past. More children are surviving and everyone knows it.

Of the 135 child deaths reported by respondents in the Chamarajanagar survey 43% were girls and 57% were boys. That a higher percentage of male children than female children died would be considered normal in most developed countries, but in India, as discussed in my introductory chapter, the all-India ratio (males per 100 females) was 107 in 1981 while the Karnataka sex ratio for the same year was 104 (P. Padmanabha, Provisional Population Tables, Census of India 1981, quoted in Dyson and Moore, 1982). The 1971 figures for Chamarajanagar taluk, rounded off, were 95.28 females per 100 males. In all caste-groups in my survey except the Sholigas more male child deaths than female child deaths were reported. It is curious that the situation is reversed in the case of the Sholigas, because in general the sex-ratio in India is more favourable to females among the hill tribes, and certainly the status of women is higher in the Sholiga tribe than in any of the other groups in Chamarajanagar taluk. It is possible, of course, that female child-deaths may have been under-reported by our respondents, but I rather doubt this, not only because daughters are usually loved in spite of the fact that the cost of their weddings is dreaded among the higher castes where the bride's families bear the heaviest expenses, but also because the birth of girls is welcomed, especially among the low castes, and their death is deeply mourned. I am unable to explain why the figures in my survey for the sex of children who died seem to contradict the sex ratio figures for the taluk, except possibly in terms of the inconsiderable size of my sample, and can only repeat that, except among those most confidently affluent and modernised, there seemed to be an acceptance, obliquely expressed and possibly not consciously recognised, of the vulnerability of boys. The findings of the Chamarajanagar

survey seem to confirm this disquiet. Other things being equal (although they mostly are not, even is south India), boys die more easily than girls, and people in Chamarajanagar seemed to know it.

According to Table 17, group V had far the highest incidence of early-age mortality. Its unfortunate constituents suffered 31.8% of all the child deaths reported by the total sample. This figure compares badly with the 16% reported by the equivalent low caste group, IV, which earns even less and lives - in general - in much the same conditions of squalor. There are two possible explanations for the difference: cold and wet monsoons engender chills and chest disorders, and the Hinterland Low Castes live mostly at a greater distance from qualified and caring medical aid. Throughout my two periods of fieldwork in the taluk there was no competent practitioner on the hills or, to my knowledge, in the villages immediately to the West of the range. In 1979, as related in Part One above, the labour force on the estates went on strike for this reason. The managers alleged that they found it impossible to get even a sub-assistant surgeon to stay in such an isolated place, and this was probably perfectly true. It will be remembered that when a compromise was reached by which a doctor came up from Chamarajanagar to run a clinic two days a week, he complained of being obliged to spend two consecutive nights in such a remote place. Sad to say, young people in India who acquire a training in skills valuable to rural communities seldom want to return to practise these skills in rural areas.

The majority of those interviewed in group V live and work on the coffee estates on the hills where the climate is often cold and wet, against which they have little protection beyond that of the oiled wool blanket or kambli issued to all employees once a year and which serves as a kind of rain cape and hood combined. Many of the children as well as the adults suffer from chronic bronchial complaints, and this is the group which, like the Sholigas, lives furthest from medical aid. Yet the second lowest

Table 17: Wife's Experience of Child Mortality by Caste

Caste-group	Child Mortality					
	1 child	2 children	3-5 children	Total child deaths	Total wives	Child deaths as % of live births to all wives in each group
I	12	3	2	25	17	14.3
II	9	3	2	21	14	13.1
III	5	1	0	7	6	4.6
IV	10	5	1	23	16	12.7
V	16	6	4	43	26	21.6
VI	10	3	0	16	13	12.5
All Caste-groups	62	21	9	135	92	13.6

percentage of child deaths, (11.9%) occurred among the Sholigas, who live under the same climatic conditions as do group V, and are, financially speaking, worse off. I think it may be due to the fact that Sholiga podu, or forest settlement, are sparsely populated, with widely separated huts, fewer flies and a comparatively unpolluted water supply. Certainly Sholiga children and adults do get colds and coughs in the monsoons, and if they contract pneumonia as a result are likely to die for want of proper treatment, but they are also less likely to contract gastro-enteritis and dysentery and to be less prone to virus infections such as influenza simply because when left to themselves, they avoid living in overcrowded conditions. They are only crammed together in close proximity with each other where they have been persuaded or coerced into 'reservations' by officialdom or plantation employers.

In even more striking contrast to the plight of group V than the Sholiga case is that of group III, the Other High Castes, with only 5% of all the child deaths reported. This is hardly surprising since the members of this group either lived in the town, within easy reach of the Primary Health Centre or of private physicians, or were well able to afford and arrange for an emergency dash by car there. On the other hand the high numbers of child deaths reported by group I, the second highest of all the groups after group V, is an anomaly for which I am unable to account. This wealthy section of the Lingayat caste has nothing in its culture or circumstances to prohibit the employment of the best possible medical care for its children. Most of the husbands interviewed in this group were either professional men or landed Gowda cultivators with motorised transport, if only a scooter or a tractor. The only ethnographic explanation I can think of is that the wives of this group were on the whole much less educated than those of group III, over half of them being in the 'Little or None' category. But since a much higher percentage of wives in group II and group IV, both of which had lower child mortality, were in this category, this does not get us much further. Certainly Scrimshaw's

argument, which also involves the neglect of daughters, does not help to explain this particular data.

Apart from the puzzle of the Rich Lingayats the early-age mortality figures for our survey seem to support accepted demographic experience. The group with the second highest fertility had the highest mortality. That those with the highest fertility had somewhat lower mortality (though there is very little difference between the two) could be construed in terms of the accessibility or otherwise of medical practitioners, whether allopathic (Western) or Ayurvedic.** The most 'modernised' group had the lowest mortality and the lowest fertility. And lastly, the Poor Lingayats, with the second lowest fertility, had fairly low (the third lowest) mortality.

2: Family Type

Demographers do not appear to see eye to eye on the effect of family structure on fertility. For instance, the Mysore Population Study, (1951), Driver, (1963), Nag, (1968), and Mahadevan, (1979) all found that fertility was higher in nuclear families than in joint families. The reason for this was said to be the segregated roles of spouses in joint families, shyness in the face of taboos against affectionate behaviour between husband and wife, the lack of privacy in general in this type of family. But in a paper published in the journal Social Change on research undertaken by the Bangalore Population Centre, P.H. Reddy came to the opposite conclusion for the Bangalore District of Karnataka (Reddy 1978). Mandelbaum goes some way towards resolving the contradiction when he suggests that the apparent lower fertility of women living in joint families may be merely a function of the typical domestic

** one of the indigenous schools.

development cycle:

> 'A newly married couple lives with the husband's parents and brothers until.. ...the married brothers separate into nuclear families, each of which becomes a joint family when the sons bring in their brides. Among poorer people the joint family stage is likely to be short' (Mandelbaum 1974, p.50)

The typology of Indian family structure is not universally applied by anthropologists and sociologists, though that of Pauline Kolenda (Kolenda 1968) is regarded by some anthropologists as the standard one. A revised classification suggested by J. Caldwell (1972) and used by Reddy (op.cit. 1978) approximates most closely to the one I finally arrived at as the most applicable to the structures commonly found in Chamarajanagar. For Tables 18, 18a and 18b the sense in which I have used this classification is as follows: Nuclear: a married couple with or without children. Into this category has been collapsed (in Tables 18a and 18b) a separate value, that of Nuclear with Accretion, where an unmarried sibling of either spouse may be living in the household. Joint: a corporate group consisting of more than one married brother, with their children, if any, and usually with their parents and any unmarried brothers or sisters, plus further accretions, if any. (I say 'usually with parents' because on the death of both parents joint families tend to segmentation, leaving one brother and his wife and children - not necessarily the eldest - in the family house). Extended: parents with one married son, his wife and any children, along with unmarried daughters and sons, if any, of the parents, and accretions, if any.

In his Tamilnadu Study, as with some of those cited by Mandelbaum, Nag, Driver and others, Mahadevan contrasts only two types, Joint and Nuclear. In the Caldwell typology used by Reddy, 'Stem' family corresponds with my Extended family while Joint and Stem-Joint correspond with my Joint family. In both cases, as in the Mysore Population

Table 18: Family Type by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Family Type					
		Nuclear %	Joint %	Extended %	Nuclear+ %	Extended+ %	Total (=100%)
I		48.0	20.0	18.0	12.0	2.0	50
II		60.0	14.0	22.0	2.0	2.0	50
III		58.0	18.0	12.0	12.0	0.0	50
IV		56.0	6.0	24.0	14.0	0.0	50
V		68.0	8.0	20.0	2.0	2.0	50
VI		62.0	2.0	28.0	8.0	0.0	50
All Caste groups	N	176	34	62	25	3	300
	%	58.7	11.3	20.7	8.3	1.0	

KEY + = with accretion

Table 18a: Current Family Size by Family Type: Percentage Distributions

Family Type		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Nuclear Family		19.5	50.3	30.3	201
Joint Family		32.4	50.0	17.6	34
Extended Family		21.5	41.5	36.9	65
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 18b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Family Type

Caste-group	Family Type			
	Nuclear	Joint	Extended	Total
I	2.6	3.1	3.9	3.0
II	2.9	1.7	3.1	2.8
III	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.9
IV	3.2	2.0	3.3	3.1
V	3.2	2.8	3.0	3.1
VI	2.2	1.0*	2.1	2.2
All Caste-groups	2.9	2.5	3.0	2.9

*Only one case

Study (1951), joint families are shown to be associated with lower fertility and nuclear families with higher fertility. The tables reveal that in Chamarajanagar there were more joint families in the three 'sanskritised' groups and a higher percentage of these in the better-off groups II and III. The three 'sanskritised' groups are also the most urbanised. A.M. Shah has pointed out that the joint family tends to be a small-town phenomenon (Shah 1973). Such families subjected to a big-city milieu are likely to hive off into nuclear flat-dwelling segments. The inhabitants of villages, on the other hand, are mostly poor people, whose accommodation would not suffice for the average joint family, which is usually a fairly well-off, orthodox lineage segment holding property in common. There are of course rich landowners living in the country on farms, in large joint family households, but their numbers are insignificant compared to the far larger proportion of villagers living in nuclear households.

Shah's analysis of the household dimension of the Indian family is confirmed by the Chamarajanagar situation, where most of the joint families reside in the town. Tables 18, 18a and 18b also seem to confirm, at first sight, the observation of Mahadevan cited above. Nuclear family households are shown to have a higher percentage of C families (4-8 children) and a lower percentage of A families (0-1) than is the case for other types of household. However, the percentage of B families (2-3 children) are about the same, which weakens the apparent positive relationship between large families and nuclear households, especially when it is noted that 70% of all Sholigas lived in nuclear households, (only one of the Sholiga couples interviewed lived in a joint family), and Sholigas had the lowest fertility. But, as explained in Chapter I of the first part of this thesis, the type of household in which a couple is living at a given time may well vary with the exigencies of the developmental cycle of the domestic group to which the couple is attached.

3: Consultation on Family Planning.

Caldwell draws our attention to the signs that a sexual revolution is beginning to take place in south India, which rural people attribute to the influence of the cinema and the spread of urban and educated or 'English' attitudes 'This tends to strengthen the bond between the young husband and his wife at the expense of that between the former and his parents'. (Caldwell 1982, p.22). The age at which women marry is also going up (see Chapter VIII in this part of the thesis). Thus various aspects of social change are combining to foster increasing consultation between spouses on most subjects, including that of family planning. Thomas Poffenberger has shown that where there is consultation on family planning between marital partners, fertility is likely to be reduced (Poffenberger 1969), and this certainly appears to be the case in Chamarajanagar. Tables 19, 19a and 19b reveal that in the category which replied 'No' to the question on consultation, the percentages of those with large and those with B (2-3) families are equal. In the 'Yes' category, those couples who did consult on family planning, the percentage of those with B familes is much higher than of those with C, or large, families. The fact that there are more A(0-1) families in the 'No' category could be explained in terms of some couples only consulting when they had reached what one or the other spouse regarded as an optimum. And the optimum is unlikely to be no children or (except in the case of the Sholigas), only one child. With the exception of group V, the Hinterland Low Castes, more couples in each group confirmed than denied consultation. Group II reported the least consultation in the high caste division and had the second lowest rate of consultation of the whole sample, albeit nothing like as low as group V. Since they also had the second lowest fertility and more couples in the group with the highest fertility of all alleged that they consulted on family planning the Chamarajanagar data on

Table 19: Husband-Wife Consultation on Family Planning by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Consultation		
		No %	Yes %	Total (=100%)
I		22.0	78.0	50
II		36.0	64.0	50
III		22.0	78.0	50
IV		28.0	72.0	50
V		54.0	46.0	50
VI		24.0	76.0	50
All Caste-groups	N	93	207	300
	%	31.0	69.0	

Table 19a: Current Family Size by Husband-Wife Consultation on Family Planning: Percentage Distributions

Husband-Wife Consultation		Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) %	B(2-3) %	C(4+) %	Total (=100%)
Consultation		16.9	54.6	28.5	207
No Consultation		31.2	34.4	34.4	93
Total	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

Table 19b: Mean Current Family Size by Caste and by Consultation on Family Planning

Caste-group	Consultation on Family Planning		
	Yes	No	Total
I	2.7	3.8	3.0
II	2.8	2.7	2.8
III	3.0	2.6	2.9
IV	3.1	3.3	3.1
V	3.6	2.7	3.1
VI	2.3	2.2	2.2
All Caste-groups	2.9	2.8	2.9

this variable is rather inconclusive. It may be that in a conservative group where most of the wives are quite uneducated while quite a high proportion of the husbands have secondary education the husbands, concerned about educating their children, called the tune about family size and the wives submitted, or at least agreed. Certainly more than one Poor Lingayat wife said that it was better to have few children so that they could be educated properly. Few of these wives worked outside the home, and most led fairly restricted lives. It is quite probable that they tended to identify with the concept of taking pride in the achievements of a few children rather than producing many children because this is what their husbands desired. A question of settling for quality rather than quantity. Certainly more husbands in this group than in any other desired small families, as we shall see in the next chapter.

4: Health and Nutrition

Replies to questions on this issue were so subjective and difficult to assess, especially with regard to their effect on fertility, that they may be discussed only at a very superficial level. According to the literature on the subject as well as personal communication by informants at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Centre for Reproductive Biology, Edinburgh, and the Community Medicine Department of St. John's Hospital, Bangalore, nutrition per se has very little effect on an individual's fertility. That is, even grossly undernourished people (as under famine conditions or in Nazi prison camps) can and do reproduce themselves. In any case there were no examples of serious malnutrition among those interviewed for my survey. The millet ragi (eleusine corocana) which provides the staple diet of the poor in our area, is extremely nutritious, much more so than the rice which is the staple of the better off, and nobody complained of food shortage. Poor people mostly said they had two ragi mudde a day. A mudde is a double handful of boiled ragi dough rather like

very stiff porridge formed into a rough ball and eaten with sambhar or 'curry' sauce. This means that they ate between one and two kilos of grain a day. One result of eating ragi is that, on the whole, the poor and low castes have very good teeth.

Although Moni Nag cites venereal disease as a major factor in fertility reduction in non-industrial societies, questions designed to investigate the incidence of venereal disease were dropped from the Chamarajanagar questionnaire after the pilot survey, partly because they were likely to give rise to prevarication and partly because they were liable to annoy and embarrass respondents when asked by non-medical interviewers. In any case group V, the community wherein V.D. seems likely to be an important factor (on account of the promiscuity alleged by the estate staff and attributed to overcrowding and the breakdown of traditional village norms), turned out to have the second largest number of children. We only came across one case of infertility which could be ascribed with a fair degree of certainty to venereal disease. This was a Harijan couple of whom the wife had been a prostitute with a thriving trade on one of the estates. She was childless. Her sister, whom she described as her husband's 'first wife' was also part of the menage and was also childless. (It is hard to say whether this could be described as a case of sororal polygyny or of concubinage).

The possibility that the relative infertility of the Sholigas might be due to sickle-cell anaemia, a common characteristic of south Indian hill tribes, has been considered, but those we interviewed all lived well above the altitude level of the anopheles mosquito.

Most of the ill-health reported by respondents of both sexes were ill-defined 'fevers', possibly malaria or influenza; intestinal disorders such as gastro-enteritis and dysentery; and bronchial complaints on the hills.

There were a few cases of heart disease, diabetes and gastric ulcer, mainly among the men. The vagueness of low caste respondents was partially due to the uncommunicative tactics of medical personnel and the apparent incuriousness of the patients. To the question: "What did the doctor say was the cause of these symptoms?" the answer repeatedly given was that he/she "didn't say". The patients seemed to be satisfied by being given an injection and tablets, although they quite frequently added that they were no better.

A high proportion of the low caste women were anaemic. Of those wives who complained of feeling permanently tired, the lowest percentages were in the two wealthy communities, I and III. They were followed by VI, the Sholigas. Group V had the highest percentage of wives complaining of permanent tiredness (56%). Most of these had the very pale inner eyelid which denotes anaemia. The high incidence of anaemia among the low castes, where women work as labourers as well as doing all the heavy work of the household, such as fetching water from well or standpipe, is the result of a vicious circle. When her first child is born, the wife is usually a healthy girl who produces a sturdy infant, the apple of its parents' eye and brought up with loving care. But with every successive pregnancy, the strain of continuous heavy work, almost continuous lactation and inadequate feeding, (because the husband and children, in that order, must be fed first and best), drains the wife of energy. Subsequent children are less and less well cared for because the mother is too tired even to take them to a doctor, if there is one in the vicinity. By the time they are forty most of the low caste girls have become exhausted hags. "Why should they get equal pay ?" the men ask, "When they can't work as hard as we do ?" When it is pointed out to them that at the end of the day they can rest, while wives

have to fetch water, light fires, cook and clean, they shrug. That sort of thing is woman's work and men can't be expected to do it. **

Physical weariness in women, as Anne Sharman maintains, can have an indirect effect on fertility by causing child mortality:

> 'The less help a woman has the less likely she is to be able to carry out her numerous tasks satisfactorily....In these circumstances marginal differences between consumption units such as the distance to fields, distance to fetch water, ease of collecting firewood... may be important in the effect they have on the care the women take of their children.... Allocation of time and resources directly affects the nutrition of children in that it determines the quantity and quality of the food they receive and the frequency with which it is prepared' (Sharman 1970,pp.83,84).

According to S. Chandrasekhar the diet of the nursing woman in the majority of Indian communities is not adequate even for a woman who does not have to meet this demand, and he reminds us that the average Indian woman is in a state of lactation, however meagre, for most of the child-bearing period of her life:

> 'While it is difficult to estimate precisely what part of infant mortality is due to maternal overall weakness, the direct relation between the overburdened mother and infant morbidity and death is obvious' (Chandrasekhar 1972,p.196).

Of those Chamarajanagar wives who felt that child-bearing was affecting their health the highest proportion were in groups V (34%) and group IV (26.3%). This was hardly surprising since these were the two groups with the highest fertility. The lowest proportion was found among the Sholigas, who also had the lowest fertility. Only one Sholiga wife complained of the ill-effects of

** One curious symptom of anaemia found among low caste women labourers on the coffee estates is a craving for a certain kind of pinkish clay, which they eat. This addiction is sneered at by the men. The women eat earth because they are stupid, they say, and eating the earth makes them stupider. In fact a doctor of the Community Medicine Department (P.T.O.)

child-bearing. In fact Sholiga women in general seem to take parturition very lightly, most of them reporting that they returned to work a day or two after the birth and that they worked a normal daily stint until the labour pains began. The relationship, therefore, between perception of disability caused by frequent child-bearing and actual fertility was close and direct.

One health variable on which questions were asked in the survey schedules involved the incidence of involuntary abortions (miscarriages). The results were curious. The highest incidence was found in group III, where 34% of the wives reported having had involuntary abortions. This was somewhat unexpected. Group III wives may be either restricted or emancipated, but they never engage in manual labour heavier than using a grindstone to crush cereals and spices. One suspects either that some of the miscarriages were not accidental or that a fairly sedentary life is conducive to aborting. The lowest incidence was found among Sholiga wives, although they lead physically active and often dangerous lives, gathering forest produce on steep hillsides, climbing trees and hoeing stony soil. But Sholiga wives are free to choose when they will stop work and go home. The next highest incidence of involuntary abortion was found among the plantation and agricultural labourers of group V. One might have anticipated that this would be so, for here women do heavy work for long hours to a schedule not of their own devising. On the other hand, the next lowest incidence was among the wives of group IV, where those who work for a cultivator employer do so under conditions even more arduous than those experienced by their caste-sisters on the hills. But only 25% of the wives interviewed in

** of St. John's Hospital, Bangalore agreed with me that the clay probably contains salts and other minerals lacking in the anaemic women's bodies, although as far as I know it has never been analysed.

this group were employed for wages. The rest worked at home at cottage industry such as silkworm rearing or flower-tying, or sold produce in the town or village bazaars, or simply engaged themselves in the manifold household tasks of the Indian peasant woman. It is possible that because the lives of these women, half of their group, who were not agricultural labourers, were active enough, without being too exhausting, to keep them fit and their muscles in good shape, they were less prone to miscarriages than the sedentary wives of group III. But it does not explain why the equally sedentary wives of group I did not also have a high incidence of abortion, unless it is the case that the exercise taken by the Lingayat Gowda women in supervising farm work helps to keep them fit. But tempting though these suppositions are they are merely speculative, albeit based on ethnographic information.

5: Wife's Age at the Time of the Survey

Table 20 presented a problem at first. It may be recalled that the ages of our cohort were 29 to 39. It turned out that in the sample interviewed far more wives claimed to be 29 (24% of the total sample interviewed) and 30 (22%) than any other age. The third largest group was of wives aged 35 (12%). There may be no single explanation for this phenomenon, and various possible reasons spring to mind. Among the uneducated, ages are as a rule only approximately known, and the clustering at ages 30 and 35 could be due to a tendency towards 'rounding up' among illiterate respondents uncertain of their exact age. But that does not explain the disproportionate number of women, including graduates, claiming to be 29 years old. It is true that even numbers are said to be inauspicious, but the interviewers, all Mysoreans and one a Chamarajanagar girl herself, were as puzzled as I was. It may of course have just been due to a tendency on the part of the women to regard the thirties as a dismal prelude to middle-age and therefore to under-report. Or of course they may actually have all been telling the simple truth. As an added complication, two women aged 40 crept in.

Table 20: Current Family Size by Caste by Wife's Age at the Time of Survey: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group	Wife's Age	Current Family Size			
		A(0-1) % of caste group	B(2-3) % of caste group	C(4+) % of caste group	Total N
I	29-32	10.0	36.0	6.0	26
	33-40	6.0	20.0	22.0	24
II	29-32	12.0	48.0	8.0	34
	33-40	4.0	12.0	16.0	16
III	29-32	16.0	26.0	8.0	25
	33-40	0.0	32.0	18.0	25
IV	29-32	10.0	34.0	26.0	35
	33-40	8.0	8.0	14.0	15
V	29-32	14.0	24.0	12.0	25
	33-40	6.0	14.0	30.0	25
VI	29-32	42.0	16.0	8.0	33
	33-40	0.0	20.0	14.0	17
All Caste-groups	N	64	145	91	300
	%	21.3	48.3	30.3	

(As the sole checker, I must accept responsibility for this error, my only excuse being the conditions under which we were all working). In view of all this it seemed expedient to collapse Wife's Age into two categories: Below 33 years and Above 33 years. This way the numerical disparity between the groups is considerably reduced and it became possible to produce a viable table with these values. Fortunately the age-groups were distributed fairly evenly within the castes.

Table 20a is of considerable interest in that it shows that the younger women are taking to contraception sooner. That is, when they have reached a smaller size of family than is the case with the older women. This is particularly striking in view of the fact that the age differences between the two categories are not great. Another noteworthy point is the very small family size of the younger women still 'at risk'.

Table 21 may throw further light on the problem. When the mean ages of wives in all caste-groups interviewed at the time of the survey were calculated it turned out that Sholiga wives averaged one year less than groups II and V, and two years less than groups I and III. Although the age differentials between Sholiga wives and those of group IV were negligible, they were just marginally the youngest group of wives. However, this circumstance would carry more force as a possible argument to account for their lower fertility were it not for the fact that group IV, which shares the youth honours with them, has the highest fertility of all the groups. But two other observable conditions, when combined with mean age, may provide some circumstantial evidence. The first is that the mean age of Sholiga wives at effective marriage was the second highest after caste-group III, the most 'modernised' group. The second is that Sholiga wives had the shortest duration of marriage, which is presumably linked with their later age at marriage.

Incidentally, it should be borne in mind that Indian women in general, apart from the ranks of the 'modernised'

Table 20a: Mean Current Family Size (Number of Cases) by Wife's Age by Use of Contraception

Wife's Age		Use of Contraception						
		Tubectomy	Vasectomy	Modern Methods	Traditional Methods	At Risk	Pregnant	Total
29-32		3.19 (47)	2.93 (15)	2.14 (35)	2.43 (44)	0.89 (27)	2.20 (10)	2.37 (178)
33-40		3.84 (32)	3.37 (19)	3.44 (16)	3.82 (38)	2.67 (15)	4.50 (2)	3.57 (122)
Distributions by Different Methods	N	79	34	51	82	42	12	300
	%	26.3	11.3	17.0	27.3	14.0	4.0	100

Table 21: Mean Figures for Wife's Age, Age at Effective Marriage, Duration of Marriage and Current Family Size, for each Caste-group

I: Richer Lingayats:	Mean Age of Wife	33	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	17	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	16	years
	Mean Current Family Size	3.0	children
II: Poorer Lingayats:	Mean Age of Wife	32	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	16	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	15	years
	Mean Current Family Size	2.8	children
III: Other High Castes:	Mean Age of Wife	33	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	19	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	14	years
	Mean Current Family Size	2.9	children
IV: Town & Around Low Castes:	Mean Age of Wife	32	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	16	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	15	years
	Mean Current Family Size	3.1	children
V: Hinterland Low Castes:	Mean Age of Wife	32	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	16	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	18	years
	Mean Current Family Size	3.1	children
VI: Sholigas:	Mean Age of Wife	32	years
	Mean Age at Effective Marriage	18	years
	Mean Duration of Marriage	15	years
	Mean Current Family Size	2.2	children

*These ages must be regarded as approximate for illiterate wives

minority, marry so young - and Chamarajanagar is no exception-that by the age of 29 the majority of them will have been married for around fifteen years, (the mean figure for the Chamarajanagar sample was 15.02) and not only have produced a number of children but may even have a daughter of marriageable age and therefore wish for that reason to cease child-bearing themselves.

6: Consanguineous Marriage.

It would wrong to close this chapter without a glance at the testimony of the data collected during the survey on the incidence of marriage to kin. Although such evidence as it affords is dubious, since I suspect a considerable degree of under-reporting, it should not be ignored entirely if R.M. Reid's theory (op.cit.1971) mentioned in my Introduction has any validity. Reid, it will be remembered, suggested that inbreeding in south India as the result of the preference for consanguineous marriage in the South (cf. my chapter on kinship in India) is associated with lower fertility (i.e. fewer offspring per consanguineous couple reach marriageable age than those per unrelated couple, and some of these consanguineous offspring may be sterile). These genetic consequences lead, he believes, to population stability and '...may have very important but unperceived adaptive and evolutionary significance.' (Reid op.cit.1975, p.165).

Dyson and Moore (1983) also cite the traditional south Indian system as a determinant of reduced fertility. In their case the premise is based on the way isogamous marriage and the renewing of links between male and female siblings by the union of their children contribute not only to the retention of ties between a wife and her parental kin, and to marriages within the wife's own locality, but in general to attention being given to the needs and wishes of daughters and sisters. In Somavarapet, the village of my residence, I found that the mean distance between the wife's natal place and her virilocal household was only ten miles,

although the sample included a few wives of well-off men with wider networks who came from towns over a hundred miles away. Of course not all consanguineous marriages are happy ones, and we came across a few cases where the fact that the husband had known his little cross-cousin or niece as a child led him to continue to treat her as child after the marriage, although the couple had sexual relations. By that I mean he did not confide in her or treat her in any way as a responsible adult, and in one case the wife complained that her husband, who was also her mama or mother's brother, beat her if she crossed him in any way. But on the whole Chamarajanagar people seem to be vindicated when they say, as they often do, "We know our child will be well treated if she is married to a young man we know well, and also we are able to keep an eye on her". Most of the consanguineous unions of people with whom I was acquainted seemed to be happy ones, arranged within the close family circle by mothers and daughters. That is, a married woman will plan with her mother to marry her young daughter to her younger brother, still living in the household which the married woman left when she wed. As mentioned in the chapter on Kinship, in the case of sister's daughter or father's sister's daughter marriage, the bride goes back, so to speak, to the household from which her mother came. And this household will usually be one which she has regularly visited as long as she can remember. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that in the case of sister's daughter marriage, the bride's mother-in-law is her maternal grandmother. This refers of course to genealogical or sothera rather than classificatory kin marriages. Obviously some cross-cousins may only be terminologically close kin, and the same is true of classificatory 'sister's daughters'.

For what it is worth, therefore, it is interesting to note that Sholigas, with the lowest fertility, had the highest percentage of kin marriages in our survey (36%), in their own generation, and that group II, with the next lowest

fertility, had the next highest percentage (32%, of which 10% was to the genealogical sister's daughter). One suspects considerable under-reporting of cross-cousin and sister's daughter marriage because in recent years it has become 'trendy' to regard these unions, especially the avuncular version; as old-fashioned or even a little shameful. In 1974 a survey of 385 households in the area revealed that 40.5% of the respondents were married to the 'correct' categories of kin. In the 1979-80 survey the figures were 39.5%. Caldwell cites a swing away from marriage to kin in his field area of Karnataka from 35% to 20% over a generation (Caldwell op.cit. 1982).

Whether or not the south Indian marriage system really does influence fertility, either in consequence of its genetic or of its affective aspects, the Chamarajanagar data does appear to support both Reid and Dyson up to a point. The group with the most kin marriages also had the lowest fertility, while the group with the next highest proportion of kin marriages had the next most favourable (in terms of India's official population policy) fertility figures. In default of time, it was impossible to take genealogies from each respondent in the sample and therefore these results are only offered as a possibly fruitful field for further research.

CHAPTER XI FAMILY FORMATION

1: Family Size

The main theme of this chapter comprises the examination of attitudes rather than of substantive data. But it is the changing of attitudes over time, under the pressures of external social change, that ultimately affects fertility behaviour. For the Poffenbergers there are two basic questions to be raised in regard to Indian fertility: 'Why people want the number of children they do, and why they do not act to terminate their fertility once they have achieved that number' (Poffenberger 1973, p.154). M.N. Srinivas, on the other hand, questions the reliability of attitude questions about ideal/desired family size:

> 'Are there notions.... of optimum family size ? Or do people take children as they come and try to make the best of the situation....? It....needs to be noted that the optimum as stated is consistently less than the numbers which the couple actually had, leading us to suppose that the answer is a forced one' (Srinivas 1977, pp.26-27)

It is true that although most of the Chamarajanagar respondents voiced quite definite opinions about the size of family (large or small) they preferred, in many cases these were expressed after the event. That is, they sometimes said they would have preferred a small family after having experienced the stresses, physical, emotional or financial, engendered by a large one. But this does not necessarily mean that the opinions of these people were irrelevant to fertility trends in the area. Writing of their field area of Gujerat the Poffenbergers could say: '....by 1969 a number of parents were telling their adult sons not to make the same mistake they did - that they should have a small family' (Poffenberger 1973,p.159). Attitudes, they claimed, were already undergoing change towards a smaller family size norm and the acceptance of modern family

planning. Caldwell too found in his field area of south Karnataka a near-consensus that family economics had changed from a past situation where large families were an advantage rather than a burden (Caldwell, 1982).

I think we can safely assume that though uneducated married couples in Chamarajanagar may start by taking children as they come, most of them pretty soon develop their own ideas as to the desirable number, especially the wives. Once a woman, particularly a poor woman who works outside the home, has proved herself to be fertile by having a couple of children, especially a son, she is likely to have some idea whether or not she wants to go on indefinitely enduring the traumas of pregnancy and childbirth and the exigencies of child care. The Poffenbergers suggest that while the wives are likely to be more highly motivated to have children in the early stages of marriage, '..once they have the number they feel are necessary they are more highly motivated to terminate fertility than are the husbands' (Poffenberger 1973, p.148). The replies of several Chamarajanagar couples illustrated this point and showed that spouses may not be united on their ideas as to what constitutes desired family size. Take, for instance, the Harijan husband with a large family who pointed out that many children meant more financial contributions, and his anaemic wife who said that she was worn out with child-bearing and wished she only had two children.

Tables 22 and 22a do show that, whether before or after the event, far more couples interviewed in the Chamarajanagar survey wanted small families. The arguments of Mamdani for the Punjab ten years ago (Mamdani 1972), and of Cain for Bangladesh (Cain, 1977), clearly no longer apply to the changing social scene in Chamarajanagar. As Caldwell observes, with the shrinking of landholdings - in Karnataka at least - children's labour is worth less, while patriarchs can no longer 'demand as much work or deny as much consumption to their children' (Caldwell op.cit 1982, p.38). It is no longer

Table 22: Couple's Preferred Family Size by Caste: Percentage Distributions

Caste-group		Preferred Family Size					
		None	Small	Large	Both have pros & cons	Undecided	Total (=100%)
I	Wife's Preference	0.0	78.0	18.0	4.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	0.0	82.0	14.0	0.0	4.0	50
II	Wife's Preference	0.0	90.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	0.0	94.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	50
III	Wife's Preference	0.0	94.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	0.0	90.0	6.0	2.0	2.0	50
IV	Wife's Preference	0.0	94.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	0.0	82.0	8.0	2.0	8.0	50
V	Wife's Preference	0.0	82.0	18.0	0.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	0.0	76.0	18.0	0.0	6.0	50
VI	Wife's Preference	0.0	94.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	50
	Husband's Preference	2.0	86.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	50
All Caste-groups	Wife's Preference	0.0	88.7	10.0	1.3	0.0	300
	Husband's Preference	0.3	85.0	10.7	0.6	3.3	300

Table 22a: Mean Current Family Size by Wife's Family Size Preference and by Wife's Education

Wife's Education	Wife's Family Size Preference			
	Large Family	Small Family	Both Good	Total
None or Primary	3.8	2.8	4.0*	2.9
Secondary	3.3	2.7	4.0	2.8
Graduate	-	1.6	-	1.6
Total	3.8	2.7	4.0	2.9

*Only one case

true that large families are 'economically rational' propositions for poor peasants, or indeed for the rich, and the majority of those we interviewed in Chamarajanagar had already arrived at this conclusion. Where today, they asked, with shrinking holdings and widespread unemployment, is gainful work to be found for many children ? For the smallholder a couple of children to gather firewood and graze livestock when young and to weed, hoe or plough when they are older, may still be essential, and for almost everyone an independently-earning child or two for support and/or assistance in old age is equally important, but what happens to the rest, who don't all die nowadays and must still be fed and clothed? 'It is only if work is available that every child can turn out to be a net asset, economically speaking' (Srinivas,1977, p.19).

It will be seen that 94% of Sholiga wives preferred a small family, and 86% of Sholiga husbands did so. In the case of caste group II these figures were reversed, 94% of group II husbands preferring a small family compared to 86% of group II wives. And with 88.7% of all wives in the sample surveyed, along with 85% of their husbands, stating that they preferred a small family, the evidence is overwhelming that, with due respect to Srinivas, many couples in Chamarajanagar do not any longer philosophically accept the fact that children just come along, and that at least the concept of an optimum may well be spreading. Of course the question as to what constitutes small or large families arises here. But a kind of collective representation emerges not only from the figures for the respondents' ideal number of children of each sex (to be discussed below), but also from the literature. The Poffenbergers (1969), Anker (1973), Mandelbaum,(1974) and Caldwell (1982) all remark that the ideal seems to be three, two sons and a daughter. The Poffenbergers add, however, that for the ideal number to live to maturity it was necessary for the villagers in their field area to have more than three children. This precaution, judging from the modal family of

three children for the Chamarajanagar sample in 1979-80, seems to have been fairly generally abandoned, at least in south India, by the end of the 1970s.

This is not to say that the help of children is no longer needed. The assistance and support of the younger generation is still badly wanted by the older. More children may go to school and there learn to play, as Caldwell suggests (Caldwell,1982), but a lot of work is still done by children in the Chamarajanagar taluk, especially the fuel-collecting and livestock-herding which frees the parents for other, more remunerative activities. And, though it is officially illegal for them to do so, the landless poor still all too frequently send their children out to work at an early age. My neighbour's second son was sent at the age of eight to live and work on a farm near the village of Somavarapet where he watched over the livestock from dawn to dusk. And, in spite of the Vlassofs' findings (Vlassof,1980), Chamarajanagar people do on the whole fear a childless future in old age, quite apart from the still-dreaded social stigma of unfruitfulness, especially for women. The plight of several childless widows, of both high and low castes,met in the course of the fieldwork bore witness to the validity of their anxiety. Direct descendants or immediately lateral cognatic kin are all the more needed because of the lack, not only of State but also of community care in India. Everyone agrees that brothers and sisters, parents and - usually - children will take care of each other, but in too many cases it does not go further than that. Without very close kin impoverished people are reduced to begging. The other side of the coin is that this is an accepted option and most people give what they can afford to beggars.

It is one thing however to want <u>some</u> children, quite another to want many children, and this is where the change in attitudes during the past two decades becomes apparent. While the Poffenbergers could say that

nobody in their field area would only have one child, we have seen that a small but significant proportion of Chamarajanagar respondents had chosen to terminate fertility after only one. Admittedly the majority of these belonged to that maverick group the Sholigas, but they were not the only ones. Some couples had opted for only one because of the wife's health, others because they wanted to concentrate all their resources on the child's education (two Brahmans, both with only daughters and one Poor Lingayat with an only son). In one case the Harijan father was already supporting two children by a previous marriage. And several of the Sholigas said they wanted only one child, regardless of sex, 'to love'.

Table 22 and 22a disclose a negative relationship between education and desire for a large family. At all levels of education more wives wanted small families, but the percentage of these went up with the ascending scale of education. Of wives with primary or no education, 87.8% wanted small families. Of those with secondary education, 91% wanted small families, and of the statistically insignificant but otherwise important graduates, 100% wanted small families. When we look at the figures for the achievement of their preference, a progression is likewise discernible. We see that for wives with little or no education, 47% of those who wanted families of 2-3 children achieved their desire. (B families). For wives with secondary education, 61% did so, and for graduates, 62.5% had so far done so. Moreover, among those with secondary education, fewer who wanted small families ended up with large ones.

Asked about their reasons for wanting small families, wives and husbands came up with a variety of explanations: Better co-operation, 'happiness', less worry, easier to feed the children. But the reply most often given by both spouses (27% of wives and 42% of husbands) was the now familiar one of 'less expense'. Chamarajanagar people repeatedly told us that in the past big families were desired because of the contributions of children (or in the case of the orthodox high castes, the sons).

Now, they said, they could not afford to bring the children up to the point at which they could start earning, even if work were available. Even among the better off (nearly all members of the higher castes) the cry was the same. "Prices are rising". The better-off or those with higher expectations, frequently cited the cost of education as their reason for opting for a small family. The low-caste, low-income groups constantly cited the cost of food: "We can't afford to feed ourselves, let alone children. We are are struggling night and day already", and "We can hardly afford to feed the ones we've got. Why have more and see them suffer ?" These comments, angry or tearful, by Harijan and Upuliga respondents, were confirmed by the fact that many of them were in debt for food alone. We have seen that a number of social changes apart from the crucial one of rapid inflation have brought about this emphasis on the cost rather than the benefit of children: e.g. the disintegration of traditional patron-client relationships, partly due to the introduction of cash crops, resulting in a breakdown of hereditary service relationships and the rise of 'class' antagonisms (cf Epstein, 1967). We have already discussed the question of land shortage. Another reason is the pressure of population itself. Sholigas complained of the shrinking of their forest habitat and the concomitant difficulties of gathering their traditional food supplies of roots, greenstuff and fruit. The effects of education and the desire for educated children plus the cost of achieving this ambition has also been enlarged upon. All in all I would agree with Caldwell (1982) that there is now a widespread apprehension of having too many children. As an Upuliga woman of Chamarajanagar put it: "Children are nothing but a burden when you have to work as we do".

One way of looking at family formation is to examine the birth intervals of contrasted groups. If we leave out all other factors associated with fertility in the Chamarajanagar survey and look at the birth intervals alone, the results illustrate the way the cultural circumstances (not necessarily the traditional cultures but the kind of conduct enjoined on them by environmental forces),

of the six groups appear to govern their individual family formation behaviour. Sholigas, with the lowest fertility, had the second longest birth intervals, probably because they had the longest lactation and post-partum abstinence periods. Group II, with the second lowest fertility, had the third longest birth intervals - that is after group V and the Sholigas. But they also had the second highest number of sterilisations. Clearly those in this group who did not terminate fertility after only a few children by means of sterilisation achieved the same result by the traditional means of wide spacing between births. Groups I and III, with the shortest birth intervals, used more modern methods apart from sterilisation than the others and also were high acceptors of sterilisation (III being the highest sterilisation acceptor and I being the highest modern contraceptive user). Group V, relying principally on abstinence (32% of the group), with the highest figures for permanent abstinence and for abstinence on special days of the week, had the longest birth intervals, even longer than those of the Sholigas, but also had the second highest fertility. As suggested in chapter VII of the second part of the thesis, this group had the type of family formation postulated by Short (1976) for 'primitive' people: several children, widely spaced, covering most of the woman's reproductive period. And lastly we have the interesting case of group IV, with the highest fertility of all, marginally higher than that of group V, shorter birth intervals than any but the two comparatively educated and well-off high caste groups, and low use of modern contraception and sterilisation. It seems that the high fertility of this relatively urbanised group may be attributed to their tendency to abandon traditional methods of family planning, such as long lactation and post-partum abstinence periods, while failing on the whole to embrace modern techniques. The family formation behaviour of this group, more than any of the others, seems to be that of a community which has fallen between two stools when it comes to family planning, and resembles most closely Srinivas's model of villagers just having to make the best of it when unpremeditated children come along instead of having some

form of control over their fertility.

2: Family Composition

Fertility is also strongly influenced by attitudes towards family composition. As Caldwell says, 'The community has fairly clear ideas on what a minimum adequate family consists of' (Caldwell, 1982, p.27). There must be one son, and - like Anker and the Poffenbergers - he found that his informants tended to prefer two sons for fear that one might die or otherwise fail to live up to the parents' expectations. I have called this the 'spare son syndrome', and it was voiced in many ways by Chamarajanagar respondents: "If one dies, the other may survive"; "If one goes wrong, we may be able to rely on the other". The latter fear was the one most frequently expressed. Although people wanted sons they tended to distrust them. As one high caste merchant said, "I hope my next child is a girl. Boys are so difficult to control". Most people wanted at least one daughter but the plural attitudes of the society are never so evident as when they are discussing females, so that though people would seldom admit to relying on a daughter for support in old age, they frequently said that they wanted a girl because you could rely on them when in trouble. Girls were often wanted so as to look after the parents when they were sick, since they are supposed to be more affectionate than are boys. "Boys often neglect their parents", said a high caste woman, "but girls never change in their affections". A Sholiga woman expressed the same sentiment in her own idiom: "A daughter will always give you food, but you can't rely on a son to do so". This was an attitude found in all the caste groups.

The prohibitive cost of daughters' weddings was often cited by members of the higher castes as a reason for not wanting more than one girl, although several others from the same groups said they wanted a girl so as to give her "a grand wedding". Among the low castes in this area, the weddings of boys costs more than those of girls, a consequence of the tradition of thera or bridewealth among the 'unsanskritised' castes. A Harijan with one son said he wanted one child of each sex. He hoped the next child

would be a girl not only because girls were auspicious but because their marriage expenses were less. Other reasons for wanting girl children revealed even more conflicting representations. A Rich Lingayat wife said "Girls are the real household gods. We need them because they bring happiness to the family". A Poor Lingayat, mindful of the omnipresent and vigilant eye of 'society', explained, "People will think less of us if we don't have a daughter". A Harijan with one son and a pregnant wife said he hoped for a daughter because "A girl is necessary", possibly referring to the role played by girls in the festivals of local goddesses, or to the general auspiciousness of a household with a girl in it. Several low caste respondents with sons said they wanted a daughter because, as one put it, "Boys with sisters respect women and know how to behave properly". Sholigas, who pay little or nothing for the weddings of their offspring of either sex, were often adamant about not having any special preference as to the sex of their children, particularly when they were giving their reasons for taking steps to cease having children after one or two girls.

Nevertheless, a preference for sons emerges from the following figures for the spouses' ideal number of children of each sex. When asked for their ideal number of girls, 77% of all wives opted for one girl and only 11% said they preferred two. When asked their ideal number of boys, 47% of all wives wanted two boys, although a surprisingly high percentage, 43%, only wanted one. In fact, 72% of Sholiga wives only wanted one boy. The most frequently reported reason for wanting girls was "love" or "affection". The most frequently reported reason for wanting boys was support in old age. Of the husbands, 74% preferred only one girl, while 15% preferred two. Forty-three per cent of husbands preferred two boys while 39% preferred only one. As with the wives, the husbands' most commonly given reason for being pleased at the birth of a girl was the love she both gave and engendered, and for a boy support in old age.

Most of the fathers I knew in the taluk were devoted to their daughters and lavished more affection on them than on their sons. On the whole, it is fair comment to say that while women in this part of India may in general be subordinated and under-valued as wives, they are highly important and valued members of the family as sisters, daughters and mothers. When my Harijan neighbours in Somavarapet, who already had two children of each sex, had an unexpected and unwanted fifth child who turned out to be a girl, those with experience of north India might have expected her to be neglected. On the contrary, the whole family were besotted about the child, who got the best of everything that very poor parents could provide and was thoroughly spoilt.

Asked whether they thought it worth while going on trying for a boy if they had already borne what they felt were all the children they could cope with, 75% of all wives said "No", including 90% of all Sholiga wives. A few (13%) said "Yes, but the same applies to a girl". In fact we only came across three cases of a wife being almost hysterically determined to have another child in the face of her husband's reluctance to have any more, and in each case it was because she desperately wanted a girl. Once, when we were interviewing a couple where the wife was pregnant, wanted the coming child to be a girl, and said that if it were not she would try again, she suddenly jumped up, rushed outside the hut to where her husband was being interviewed, and shouted at him, "Don't you dare let them talk you into being sterilised until we see what sex this child will be. I must have a girl". (Needless to say she was a low caste woman. Shouting at husbands and even addressing them in the insulting neuter gender if displeased, is quite in order for low caste women, however put upon work-wise). More husbands (59% of them) thought it worth while going on trying for a boy, compared with the 31% who did not think so. Those who thought it worthwhile must either have been fortunate in the sex composition of their families or

unfortunate in that their wives would not co-operate, since our modal figure of 3, and mean family size of 2.9 for the whole sample are some indication that the majority of couples interviewed in Chamarajanagar taluk did not go on trying for very long. One suspects that the collective ideal for all but the most sophisticated or the most self-sufficient in Chamarajanagar is two boys and a girl, while for the small class of sohisticates as well as for the Sholigas, it is one of each sex.

CONCLUSION

Before setting out to draw inferences from the substance of the preceding chapters, I think it proper to declare my own interest. Although academic convention may require objectivity in scholarship, it is difficult to achieve in the social sciences. I am convinced that in these fields researchers cannot avoid being influenced by their own values and that scholarship is therefore best served when these values are openly disclosed and acknowledged. By the same token, I trust that it will not only be more honest but also more useful to admit that my own experience in the field has predisposed me to bias on the following matters: firstly I am convinced that a population 'problem' exists, and that, while institutional changes and an equitable redistribution of resources are indeed urgently needed in India, no amount of reform can prevent a catastrophic deterioration of the quality of life for all social strata if the population continues to increase unchecked. For example, in the 20-odd years between my previous and subsequent acquaintanceship with Chamarajanagar town, the population had more or less doubled (from 16,040 in 1951 to 31,069 in 1971), and its pressure on the environment was unmistakeably evident. Since pollution levels do appear to rise as the population expands, surely this state of affairs alone argues that a limit should be set to population (see Singer 1971), and every effort made to achieve a state of balance with the eco-system. A single instance of the way the eco-system - and by corollary the people - of the taluk are suffering is the growing scarcity of firewood, the cooking fuel of the poor, and of grass as the population and its livestock encroach increasingly on the dwindling reserves of forest, scrub and grassland.

So it follows that I also believe in population control, albeit a control to be exercised by the choice of the parents themselves, particularly the mother.

> And in the Indian context this means the assurance that those children who are born will grow up. It also means that final decisions about having more children should rest with the wives who have to bear and rear them, that safe means, traditional or modern, of family planning should be available to them, that childbearing should not be their only hope of fulfilment in life and of standing in the community, that daughters should no longer be considered inferior to sons, and that women who for one reason or another cannot have children are not condemned to suffer lifelong shame and denigration.

Secondly, I have come to believe that the question of gender relations lies at the heart of the population problem in India, although the relationship is not always a straighforward one and a number of other variables are also involved. This belief is reflected in the last lines of the paragraph above. Moreover, my fieldwork, along with a study of the literature on Indian kinship, has led me to agree with Dyson and Moore, Miller, Sopher and others that there is a North/South dichotomy in Indian culture which appears to be reflected in the parallel high caste/low caste dichotomy that - in Chamarajanagar at least - has become distorted by intervening variables such as Westernisation, education and the whole syndrome loosely called 'urbanisation'.

And thirdly, if, as Caldwell asserts, it is mass education which leads, via the adoption of liberal values, to fertility reduction, then hooray for mass education. But, to avoid instant ostracism by angry anthropologists, I hasten to add that the values which Caldwell clearly has in mind are by no means intrinsic to Western liberals alone but are also to be found in many non-Western societies, from the !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari to the Sherpas of Nepal, including a high proportion of Indian hill tribes. What this moral climate really consists of is a kind of non-sexist tolerance, an unprejudice which includes acceptance by the society of the concept of personal integrity of the individual of either sex. It was to be found in Chamarajanagar

not only among the very few highly educated and 'modernised' residents there but also among the least educated and modernised community in the taluk, the Sholiga tribe. This group does not need to adopt egalitarian ideas from elsewhere when it comes to gender relations. They already possess as part of their own culture a code of practice which allows for equal decision-making for both sexes as to their personal concerns. And it appears to be no coincidence that their fertility is lower than that of any other group surveyed in the taluk.**

Throughout the chapters concerned with data from the survey, an effort has been made to reduce the responses collected in the questionnaire into a quantifiable form, and to identify significant relationships between the variables believed to be the most relevant to the fertility behaviour of the couples interviewed in Chamarajanagar. Quantitative methods, however indispensable for converting surmise into substance, are of course clumsy tools when it comes to understanding 'the complex interaction of events and circumstances' as Joan Busfield puts it (Busfield and Paddon, 1980), which bring about the conception and birth of a child in any country. But despite the sometimes baffling and equivocal nature of the evidence indicated by some of the tabulated data and the labyrinthine ways taken by the analytical argument, which from time to time disappears completely like a river going underground in limestone terrain, certain salient points persist.

A superficial examination of the variables gives the impression that a positive relationship exists between joint households, top grade housing, high income, large landholding and low fertility. But if we look more carefully, we see that only one Sholiga couple and four from group II (the two groups with the lowest fertility) belong to joint families; that no Sholiga couple and only one from group II live in top grade housing; that no Sholigas and only one from group II have even a relatively high income; and that

** In the interest of accuracy it is necessary to add that Sholigas are by no means free from caste prejudice.

no Sholigas and no members of group II have large landholdings. This is not to say that the 'background' variables discussed above do not have a bearing on fertility, but that they are unreliable indices without further specification. Moreover it becomes increasingly clear that more than one model must be sought to account for the reproductive behaviour of all the groups interviewed.

Certain relationships appear to have been established.

(1) Economic status as represented by life-style is only an influence on fertility as the prelude to and manifestation of education and/or Westernisation, as well as reduced child mortality. (2) Education for the husband has an effect in two different ways: for the poor man with ambitions for his son(s) and occasionally for his daughter(s), the cost of educating and bringing up the child combined with the long delay before any return can be expected will tend to inhibit his commitments in children. For men in a better financial position, education may lead to Westernisation and to the acquisition of an educated wife, both of which situations tend to result in motivation to have fewer children. Education also reduces child mortality and therefore the need to have a surplus of children. (3) Higher education in the wife has a more profound effect. With its corollary of Westernisation and 'modernisation' it encourages her to break away from traditional attitudes concerning the roles and goals of women; it inclines her husband to respect her views; it qualifies her for a profession and thus endows her with earning power which will make it unnecessary for her to 'prove' herself through child-bearing; and it encourages the couple to have aspirations for their daughters' careers and achievements beyond those of marriage and motherhood. (4) Low child mortality, as suggested above, leads to less need for extra children and to longer birth intervals. (5) The health of the wife and mother affects child

mortality. (6) Consultation between spouses leads to earlier adoption of family planning. (7) The higher the wife's age at effective marriage the fewer children she is likely to have since her reproductive period is thus reduced. (8) The preference for sons leads to the desire for an extra son if there is only one among a couple's offspring, or to a series of births due to repeated attempts to produce a boy, and thus to a couple having more children than they otherwise might have done. (9) In Chamarajanagar this component applies to a lesser degree to the desire to have a daughter among couples who have only produced boys, although the urge to have sons is still in general more prevalent than the urge to have daughters. (10) It seems that consanguineous marriage, at least if practised over time, may reduce fertility. And lastly, if - irrespective of education and economic status - it is accepted automatically by the community that women are independent individuals whose control over their own fertility is their own business and whose reproductive capacity or intention is no reflection of their intrinsic worth, and if these women have the knowledge and means of controlling their fertility, and do so in the awareness that the children they do bear are likely to survive, then fertility may well be conspicuously reduced.

How does the fertility of our six local jati bear out these inferences ? The two with the highest fertility, with no significant differences in number of living children and mean current family size, were the two low caste groups: poor, in the main uneducated, with high child mortality and low age at effective marriage. The next highest fertility was found among the Richer Lingayats, who - strangely enough - appeared to have also suffered the next highest child mortality. The majority (though by no means all, there were notable exceptions), of this group were still attached to traditional norms when it came to such matters as the education of wives, 52% of whom had little or no education, compared to 24% among the Other High Castes (III). The fertility of group III,

with far more educated wives, was lower than was the case with the three groups mentioned above, but that of group II was lower still. Group II, 52% of whose husbands had had secondary education, compared to 18% in group IV and 2% in group V, was the most concerned with the cost of education, because they were far more committed to educating their children than were groups IV and V, while possessing in general less ample means than those in groups I and III. Group VI, with the lowest education and the lowest income, but also with the second lowest child mortality, had nevertheless the lowest fertility of all.

The answer seems to be that reduced fertility in groups I to V came about as the result of two clusters or 'packages' of circumstances. (1) Social change leading to education, leading to Westernisation, leading to female autonomy (or relative autonomy), and thence to reduced fertility. (2) Social change plus economic change (e.g. inflation),leading to a desire for education of the next generation which would be frustrated if not mediated by reduced fertility. In the case of group VI the model is different again: here we have tradition rather than social change leading to reduced fertility, because the tradition is one that accepts the female autonomy which is only arrived at in other groups through a series of changes. When this tradition is buttressed by low child mortality and the women's knowledge of traditional methods of controlling their reproduction, as in the case with group VI, it is apparent that they have already reached the bourne towards which the rest of the country is still struggling and that their compatriots have a good deal to learn from them.

Recommendations in the light of the Research

Whether or not it is usual to include suggestions for action in a thesis, it is virtually impossible to undertake a research project in the field without becoming aware of various desirable eventualities. A number of these emerge from the Chamarajanagar research and

failure to mention them seems unreasonable. To wind up this chapter therefore a few submissions on the policy implications of this study may be in order despite the fact that questions of procedure and legislative implementation are well outside its remit. It is clear, for instance, that if the following selection of desiderata were to be brought about there is a strong likelihood that fertility would be reduced. (Whether or not it would be possible for a democratic government to effect such admittedly utopian reforms is another story. Legislation alone without proselytisation and inducement has not been shown to have much success in any country).

(1) The establishment of tubectomy camps at regular intervals in rural areas to give women access to sterilisation as and when they wish to cease child-bearing. (The Bangalore Population Centre has shown that post-operative complications for tubectomy acceptors are lower in camps than in hospitals, while the reverse is true of vasectomy acceptors).

(2) The deployment of regular, wife-oriented 'camps' to publicise the advisability and availability of family planning, to advise on child welfare and to persuade uneducated wives to return to longer periods of lactation to bring about longer birth intervals and increase the survival chances of their infants.

(3) A drive to achieve the payment of equal economic rewards for working women, along with equal opportunities for their employment in high-status jobs and a campaign to combat gender-stereotyping both in school curricula and the labour market.

(4) The provision of collective day-care facilities for those women participating in the formal labour market who lack kin or employees to mind their children.

(5) The legal promotion of wives, especially those unable or unwilling to engage in the formal labour market, to joint proprietorship in the couple's resources, plus co-partnership and joint household-headship with their husbands, thus granting to housework its due recognition as an important factor in the household's economic production.

(6) More effective measures to ban the institutions of dowry, early teen-age marriage and conspicuously expensive weddings for girls.

(7) Propaganda and in-service teacher training to combat sex-stereotyping of children, to advocate higher education for girls and to encourage them in aspirations other than marriage and child-bearing.

(8) A massive re-education campaign, using radio, cinema, press and television to depict girls as combining the roles of filial daughters and successful breadwinners, especially in the professional fields as well as those requiring initiative and mechanical ability.

(9) Mandatory equal representation by women on caste and village panchayat boards.

(10) A radical re-thinking of policy in regard to hill tribes such as the Sholigas, whose dwindling numbers manifest their low fertility. While they are at best haphazard cultivators, the food they gather at present makes their diet nutritionally superior to that of other impoverished communities in the taluk. If forced to live by cultivation alone, their condition would be miserable. In their forest podus, they and their children live in a relatively healthy environment. Placed in closely packed settlements, they become rural slum dwellers.

Comparing groups of foraging and sedentary !Kung Bushmen, Patricia Draper observed that whereas in the bush setting females enjoy a high degree of autonomy and freedom from subordination to men, once they were settled and turned to cultivation and animal husbandry, there was a decrease in the influence and freedom of the women (Draper, 1975). One suspects that the same situation would arise with the Sholigas unless they become recipients of a new and imaginative 'development' programme which would seek to preserve those elements of their culture which would benefit the population planners as well as Indian society as a whole. The results of the Chamarajanagar research have revealed that Indian planners have much to learn from tribes such as the Sholigas. There seems to be no advantage therefore in encouraging them to abandon their traditional norms if these are more valuable to the State than are the norms of the society with which it is planned to integrate them.

In winding up this chapter, and with it the thesis, it must be said in defence of the advocacies listed above that they are not necessarily as over-optimistic and illusory as some may suppose. Purushottam Lal, until recently India's permanent representative at the United Nations, has been quoted as saying (New York Times, April 4th. 1976) "Things are always getting better and worse in India at the same time", and while this paradox is by no means confined to India, there is much truth in it in the case of Chamarajanagar and other areas of south Karnataka. On the one hand the pressures of population, land hunger and short-sighted utilisation of resources are destroying the environment. On the other a Caldwellian demographic transition seems to be gathering momentum, both encouraging and abetted by the current family planning programme. The evidence that married couples in Chamarajanagar are taking to contraception at an earlier age than was the case five to ten years ago (see table 20a), is such a hopeful straw in the wind that the twin goals of greater reduced fertility and the emancipation of women on an all-India basis seems less and less like utopian millenarianism and more and more like a distinct, if remote, possibility.

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